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PHOTOGRAPHY BY MARGARET MALANDRUCCOLO

So what is a **MOJO?**

It is, in short, the staple amulet of African-American hoodoo practice, a flannel bag (magazine) containing one or more magical items (motorcycles). The word is thought by some to be a corruption of the English word "magic" but it more likely is related to the West African word "mojuba," meaning a prayer of praise and homage.

A prayer of praise and homage... toward motorcycles?





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MotoreyeleMojo

AUGUST 2015 • VOLUME 14 ISSUE 7

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Online & Technical Gooder Marketing

Printing Transcontinental LGM – Coronet

Circulation and Fulfillment KCK Global Limited

Distribution Disticor

PRINT & DIGITAL SUBSCRIPTIONS

www.motorcyclemojo.com/subscriptions@motorcyclemojo.com 1-877-330-3737

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Motorcycle Mojo is published in Thornton, Ontario by Riptide Resources Inc. and is proudly printed in Canada. #96–10 issues per year. Available at Newsstands across Canada. We acknowledge the financial support of the Government of Canada through the Canada Periodical Fund of the Department of Canadian Heritage and the Ontario Media Development Corporation. Publications Mail Agreement #40761040

Return undeliverable Canadian Addresses to Motorcycle Mojo 1169 Wilson Road, Hillier, ON K0K 2J0 ISSN 1913-7621

















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MY COLLECTION OF STUFF

t's surprising how much crap you accumulate over the span of 19 years. I can say this honestly because my wife and I have been dealing with the purging of some of it, as we are about to embark on a major move of home and office to beautiful Prince Edward County, Ontario, with what I've been told has some great riding roads to explore. Anyone who has lived in the same place for any length of time knows what I'm talking about. I have to hand it to Gwen, as she has been doing the lion's share of the packing — she knows that if I were involved, most of it would not be moving with us. My reasoning is that if you

haven't seen it or used it for years, you obviously don't need it. I understand that some of it is sentimental, but explain to me again why we need to keep a headless, naked Spice Girl Barbie. I guess I'm just less sentimental and don't see the need to keep the band together.

Our daughter, Emily, has also arrived from British Columbia after a week-long adventurous road trip on her

Suzuki where she got stuck in snow in Idaho and became involved in a small bar fight in North Dakota. Her help with packing ensures our albums and turntable will eventually make it to B.C. in the future.

I looked after packing up the garage and the garden sheds, and I have to admit that I could be accused of being a bit of a pack rat myself. But in my defence, all my stuff is good, and other than a wide variety of tools, the bulk of it is motorcycle related. I've found

in boxes various parts I haven't seen for years from a bike I had way back in 1988. I even found a Haynes repair manual from my first streetbike, a 1978 Yamaha XS650 Special that I bought in '79. And therein lies my argument about keeping motorcycle stuff.

There really isn't anything sentimental about motorcycle parts. Keeping that carburetor from a mid-'80s Evolution engine seemed a good idea at the time, because you never know when you might be able to use it in the future. Case in point: Last fall I stumbled across, and bought, a 1981 XS650 in exceptional condition with only 10,257 km on the clock. And that Haynes manual I've been

holding onto for 36 years will come in quite handy, I'm sure.

Also included in my share of packing was several hundred pounds of engine internals and cases along with various cycle parts, mostly from Honda's venerable CB750 single-cam motorcycles of the '70s. The single-cam is just one of my project bikes that I'm still hoping to someday find time to work on.

I've commented

before about the lack of time to work on my projects, and I'm not sure why I think I'll have more time available once the moving dust settles, but I will have more room, for not only the projects, but also for the new *Mojo* headquarters, which have been in the Barrie area for the past 15 years.

I'm thinking it's about time to start hitting more swap meets; I'll now have a bit of extra room to collect more good crap, because I know that one day I might be able to use it.

KEEPING THAT CARBURETOR FROM A MID-'80S EVOLUTION ENGINE SEEMED A GOOD

INFA AT THE TIME

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ach year, the upper echelon of motoring majesty gather on the shores of Lake Como, in the Lombardy region of Italy, for the Concorso d'Eleganza Villa d'Este. Just saying it out loud makes me want to don a tux and sip fine Chianti.



As tradition has come to dictate, BMW unveiled its latest styling exercise amidst the glitz and glamour of the lakeside showcase this past May.

The "Concept 101" is a major departure from the norm for BMW, and its cruiser layout, based on the K1600GT chassis and powertrain, may just give us a hint of what's to come from Bayaria.

Named for the approximately 101 cubic inches displaced by its inline six-cylinder engine, the Concept 101 has emerged out of

yet another partnership between BMW and designer-builder Roland Sands.

Some may recall that this is the same team responsible for the R nineT, which went from prototype debut – at this very event – to production within a short time. And it's also worth noting that the prototype Concept Roadster streetfighter – another Concorso reveal from 2014 – also emerged, almost unchanged, as the R1200R production model featured on the cover of our May issue. Perhaps we are seeing a trend.

manufacturers.

"We had a clear vision when we were designing the bike," explains Ola Stenegard, head of vehicle design BMW Motorrad. "We wanted to build a high-performance, emotional and highly exclusive six-cylinder vehicle that would make every ride a special experience; a bike that would make the moment so special, you would forget your destination."

American-made iron currently rules the luxury bagger market, with only a handful of models competing for high-profit sales. Should BMW have any intentions of joining the fray with a production version of the Concept 101, it would definitely shake up the segment, and with BMW's history of fine touring machines, it certainly knows how to let its customers cruise in style.

For more information on the Concept 101, visit motorcyclemojo.com and check out our news section.

News...

his past May. the Canadian Motorcycle Hall of Fame released its list of motorcycling legends and champions to be honoured in 2015.

Motorcycle Mojo magazine would like to congratulate the 2015 Canadian Motorcycle Hall of Fame inductees:

- Jim Allen (Competitor – Road Racing)
- Chris Evans (Competitor -Flat Tracker)
- Al Johnson (Competitor – Road Racing)
- Iohn Kehoe (Competitor -Speedway)
- George Morin (Competitor – Road Racing)
- John Ranger (Competitor – Trials)
- Albert Irwin (Contributor)
- Jim and Muriel Kelly (Contributor)
- Warren Thaxter (Contributor)

• Ted Sturgess

- Bob and Bryan Sparks (Historical)
- (Historical) The 10th annual Canadian Motorcycle Hall of Fame Induction Banquet and Reunion will take place on Nov. 7, 2015, at the Sheraton Toronto Air-

Tickets for the event are available online at canmoto.ca.

ence Centre in Toronto.

port Hotel & Confer-

Isle of Man TT



CHARLIF COLLIFR was the first winner of the single-cylinder class aboard a Matchless, with an average speed of 38.22 mph.

Until the early 1920s, the roads were not closed to the public during practice sessions.



was essentially a cart track

with gates across the road in

responsibility of the day's first

rider to open all the gates, and

the last rider round on the day

would close them all.

several locations. It was the

Est 1907

Joey Dunlop won the first of six straight Formula One TTs in 1983, all aboard Honda machinery.

At the age of 48, Dunlop won three TT races in 2000, bringing his total number of race wins on the island to 26.

1961

Ramsay Cruickshank Corner TT Course Parliament Square May Hill Milntown Lezavre 37 Milestone Gooseneck lnev's 20) Ginger Hall **Guthrie Memorial** Sulby Straight Sulby Crossroads Mountain Mile Ballacrye Bend Mountain Box Ballaugh Bridge Alpine Cottage Verandah Bishopscourt Graham Memorial Birkin's Bend Hailwood Rise Kirk Michael Brandyv Douglas Road Corne Duke's Bends

Windy Corne

Keppel Gate

Kate's Cottag

Gob-ny-Geay

Brandish Corne

Cronk-ny-Mona (36)

Union Braddan

Bedstead Corner

Governors Bridge

The Nook

Start/Finish

Douglas

Bray Hill

Cronk Urleigh

Crossroads

Bottom of

Lambfell

Creqwillys Hill

Glen Helen

Laurel Bank

Doran's Bend

Handley's Corner

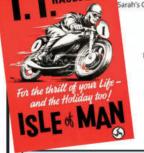
Drinkwater's Bend

Mike Hailwood won his first three T in 1961, two of which were aboard Hondas, bringing the Japanese manufacturer its first TT wins.

After 11 years away, Hailwood returned to the TT in 1978, bringing with him the largest crowds ever seen before or since. He Crea-ny-Baa

would not disappoint, taking home top honours in the Formula One class aboard a Ducati. The follow-Signpost Corner

ing year he won his 14th and final TT.



The Isle of Man Senior TT race record was set in 2015 by John McGuinness. He averaged 130.481 mph over 4 laps and finished in a time of 1 hour 9 minutes and 23.9 seconds.

News...

orld traveller and author Jeremy Kroeker is preparing to release a new book. Entitled Motorcycle Messengers: Tales From the Road by Writers Who Ride, this latest project features a collection of pieces from notables such as Ted Simon, Paddy Tyson, Lois Pryce, Neil Peart and, of course, Jeremy Kroeker, plus many more.

The Highlander

Greeba Castle

Greeba Bridge

Crosby

The book is planned for an August 2016 release and will initially be available at OscillatorPress.com.

-THREADS

TECH TALK

Proof of Concept

he wraps have finally been taken off Victory's Project 156, and what has emerged is a bare-bones, no-nonsense race bike, representing a big change for the company's image.

We recently featured the Victory Magnum—a custom bagger true to the lineage of American V-twin cruisers—in the magazine. If you had asked me then what I thought they would come up with next, I would have been *so* wrong.

Since that test, Victory had an electric bike in this year's Isle of Man TT, taking 3rd and 4th place, and with Project 156 completed, the company has now taken on the Race to the Clouds at the famed Pikes Peak International Hillclimb.

This trellis-framed, V-twin-powered prototype had a quick mention in our pages before, but this time we have a lot more to look at.

The engine appears to be a heavily modified variation of









Victory Motorcycles and RSD work feverishly to prototype, develop and refine "Project 156" in time for the big day. The design screams function over form resulting in a lean, mean purpose-built racing motorcycle.



Several of the industry's top suppliers have contributed, including Öhlins suspension, Brembo brakes and Dunlop tires, to name a few.

Most everything else on Project 156 has been purposebuilt by Victory and motorcycling's man-of-the-moment, designer-builder Roland Sands, along with his team at RSD.

"This truly has been an All-American effort," says Sands. "The Race to the Clouds is a legendary event and we couldn't be more proud to partner with Victory. We've built lots of custom motorcycles, but building a purpose-built race bike for this project has been a unique experience that we'll remember for a long time."

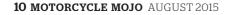
So why is Victory so keen on this new image? Well, according to Victory general manager Rod Krois, "We have an intense focus at Victory Motorcycles to prove the performance of our vehicles. Competing as an American OEM at America's race is an exciting opportunity. The gruelling conditions at Pikes Peak provide the perfect proving ground for our new Project 156 race engine."

CHECK IT OUT Off and Running



http://goo.gl/2AY42B

Victory has just released its third video for Project 156 on its YouTube channel. This is the first time we get to see and hear what all the fuss is about.



Say What?

editor@motorcyclemojo.com

OZARK BOUND

Just got back from the Ozarks. I was looking for a week to burn-up some vacation time, and I was reading through the April 2015 issue about the Arkansas Dragon. So, I copied your run and spent a couple of days down there. Thanks for the ideas—had a good time. It was cold down there—mid-50's; too cold for them but not for us Canucks.

JONNY CANNON VIA EMAIL

ride to the Yukon and Alaska so that he could evaluate his V-Strom. The first 1600 km, from Vancouver to Prince Rupert, was covered off in two days. The longest distance travelled before refuelling was 370 km – this represented the maximum fuel range of my bike rather than the limit of Ted's endurance. You have to wonder what makes a man like this tick?

AERON STEDMANN VIA EMAIL

NO LIMITATIONS

Last summer while reading a copy of this publication I was saddened to see a letter from a gentleman who had just turned 70, stating it was time to give up riding and promptly cancelled his subscription.

The letter got me to thinking about the many individuals I have encountered over the years. I have participated in 11 Three Flags Classic events, and on many occasions the oldest rider was in their mid-70s, and on one event, as I recall, was 80-years-old and had just completed a 3500 km ride in four days. Walt Healey who was in his early-70s completed the event on a very large Yamaha securely tethered to a sidecar. He proved to be quite an entertaining character, and managed to regale a small audience at the finish line about riding his ancient Harley to the same Mexican village 50 years earlier.

Expand your mind and awareness is a belief and mantra of a hard riding octogenarian, which also happens to be a friend of many years. Ted Havens, now 89, is not one who accepts limitations easily. In fact, when he turned 87, he decided to sell his old bike and purchase a new lighter, Suzuki 650 V-Strom. Last year, at the tender age of 88, Ted suggested we take a short 6000-plus km

DIGITAL CONVERT?

I have been a subscriber for many years and just had to tell you that I read the entire June edition on my tablet while travelling on business last week. First time I've really made use of the digital edition and it rocks! It feels good to enter the 21st century. Keep up the great work.

WAYNE McCurdy via email

ROMANCE REKINDLED

I don't think that I properly thanked you (Gwen) and Glenn for helping me out all those years ago with my Ducati. I started to fall out of love with the whole motorcycle/motocross industry and wasn't sure if I really even wanted to ride again.

I have found over the past year that that spark has been lit again, and the romance is rekindled. Going to a motorcycle show really reminded me how awesome people in the industry really are, and how great of a community it is to be a part of. Getting my new bike, and doing all the work on it myself (cosmetic upgrades) has also made me appreciate my bike more, and help me build up my confidence again that I lost years ago.

Andrea via Facebook

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO SAY? We love hearing your thoughts on an article, comments, suggestions or criticisms.

Comments selected for publication may be edited for grammar, readability and length. Send notes to editor@motorcyclemojo.com.



From: Mike Nisbet

Carol and Earl's

ast summer I took my first long road trip on my bike. I rode from St. Thomas, Ontario, up through Michigan, across to Sault Ste. Marie and up to Wawa. On my way back, I continued along the Canadian side to Manitoulin Island and across to Tobermory. While spending the night in South Baymouth, I tried a mom-and-pop restaurant recommended by some friends called Carol and Earl's. Great fresh-made food at reasonable prices!

It's just one minute from the ferry dock at 21306 Hwy 6. I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone on a road trip through South Baymouth.

Oh, while you're there, spend the night at the Huron Motor Lodge. Great rates, friendly folks and also right by the ferry dock.

Got a favourite restaurant or pub? Send us an email to editor@motorcyclemojo.com and tell us why.

DON'T SKIMP ON GEAR!

was minibike racing a few weekends ago and riding the best I'd ridden in a long time. I felt strong and confident, my visual skills were flowing well, and I was right up there with the top riders. Then, suddenly, I was flying through the air. I landed on my head with a thud.

It took me several seconds, maybe even minutes, to get up. Experience has taught me that you should always wait awhile after crashing before attempting to stand up. I took inventory of my body: I could breathe, my head hurt a little and my wrist was really sore, but everything else was okay. I sat up slowly, a little dazed and confused. I wasn't entirely sure where I was on the track. I walked carefully back to the pits, feeling a bit disoriented. I thought the tent at the pits should be facing the other way. I was a little turned around.

Unfortunately, that was the end of my race day. With ice on my wrist, I headed off to the hospital to see if it was broken. Then I looked at my helmet. My beautiful Arai was scuffed and scraped – and done. Retired. It was now time to put it up on the shelf as a memento of my race and of my crash, and as a reminder that it had saved my noggin.

I told a non-racing friend of mine about the crash, how the helmet was now finished and that I needed to pick up another one. I then told her how much a good-quality helmet costs these days. "There went \$600 down the drain," she said.

Nope. Not down the drain, I replied. The helmet did its job, and did it extremely well. Had I been wearing some cheap piece of crap, I surely would have been knocked out, and possibly sustained permanent damage to



my brain. My head is valuable and well worth \$600, and as much as it sucks to have to shell out more money to replace it, I think it's a worthy investment. In fact, whenever I hear about people skimping on gear, it really makes me question where their priorities lie.

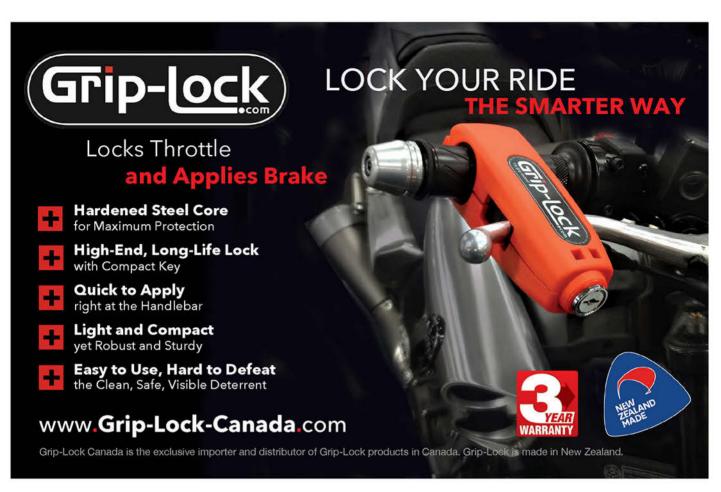
I've questioned riders before, those who go out and buy a fancy-schmancy new bike, put aftermarket pipes on it, maybe a solo seat, some bling, and then after shelling out all this cash to make their bike pretty, they scoff at the price of a good-quality helmet, or riding boots or leather gear. "Can you put a price tag on your head or your hands or your body? How can you justify spending \$400 on a shiny new pipe but not on a jacket that will protect you if you go down?" I've asked them.

In my opinion, riders should take their bike budget and choose good gear first, maybe invest in a riding school or some lessons, then purchase the bike with what's left. It's better to have a less expensive, less beautiful bike but know you're going to be as safe as possible if you do fall down. It's better to invest in yourself, to make yourself the best,

most knowledgeable rider first and foremost, and to protect your body and your head with the best gear, and then invest in the bike.

So yes, it sucks that I have to buy a new helmet. But despite my racetrack mishap, I got to go home and put my kids to bed that night. I stood up and walked away from the crash, and I'm sitting in the coffee shop today with my computer, with my wrist in a brace clumsily typing out this column, instead of lying in the hospital with a head injury. I'm thankful that I had all my expensive, good-quality gear on when I crashed. I hadn't skimped and I didn't get seriously hurt.

So please, if you are in the market for some new gear, get a good-quality, properly fitted helmet from a reputable manufacturer. Invest in proper gloves and boots, leather or textile jacket and pants or full leathers with proper armour including a back protector. Don't settle for less and make sure it fits. Consider taking a riding course and brush up on your skills to reduce the chance of going down in the first place. MM







THE EVENING PUTT

'm not one for riding at night. I'll do it if I have to, but where I live, there are just too many of God's creatures, great and small, that like to wander on the highway. Hitting any one of them has the ability to ruin more than just one night. However, there is the odd evening that has "ride" written all over it. Last weekend we had just such a night; it was time to turn my senses to high alert and hope that Rocky Raccoon wasn't out shopping yet.

As usual, our home was full with family and friends. There was a big high school reunion on the go that had pulled people from all parts of Canada back to their hometown, and the town to the east was hosting a huge fishing derby that attracted visitors from as far away as Missouri. The whole area was hopping. It was also one of the nicest evenings of the season. Who could possibly turn down an evening putt to snoop around the festivities?

I announced I was jumping on two wheels for an hour or so, and my daughter magically appeared with her mother's riding gear on. I swear my wife cannot find

all her riding gear as fast as my daughter can. (Daughters must take inventory of what their mothers have in their closets.)

their closets.)

We wandered out and I extracted my bike from between all the cars that used it as a "park here" bull'seye. It was the kind of night where you only needed the ou a riding coat to be comfy, which

where you only needed the outer shell of a riding coat to be comfy, which meant we had all the armour and reflective stuff that you could ever need. I'm sure we must've looked like a fully lit Christmas tree in the lights of the cars around us.



There was a laidback feeling as soon as we started down the driveway; upshifts were slow, with no hurry to get the revs up, and the maximum posted speed seemed to just fit the ticket, if not even a tad aggressive. Some very nice construction types had put down fresh pavement on our route, so the bike just seemed to be magically floating along, and yawning in the process. We were going slowly enough that I noticed a bunch of new buildings going up that I hadn't noticed before, so by kilometre five, we were turning into serious rubberneckers and discussing the various projects as we went along.

Arriving at the fishing derby headquarters, I was just bowled over by the attendance. I swear you could walk from one side of the Trent River to the

other, just by hopping boat to boat; it was like fishing in downtown Toronto at rush hour. Motor homes and trailers jammed the local park, while campers occupied the shoreline. I parked the bike and we decided to take a little wander around, catch the scoreboard and see if there were any names on the list we recognized.

There was a trailer that was fabricated into a big freshwater fish tank, and all the fish caught were deposited there. It was quite a sight to view the pickerel and pike that had gotten a little too curious. There were several other riders

AROUT THE

BIG THINGS

also just poking around and we chatted with a few. Their stories were all similar: "Perfect night for a putt." Most of the folks we spoke with were local and there was no rush to accomplish anything other than to enjoy the night.

By now Mother Nature had turned the big light off and it was time to think about returning home. I grabbed my helmet, only to find that a gazillion of those tiny gnats that hang around lakes and rivers had moved into it. I thought I had whooshed them all out, but as soon as I flipped my visor down, little spots started walking around inside. Rocky Raccoon wasn't up and around yet, so our ride back home was completely peaceful. My daughter was sitting back, just enjoying the air flowing over her. I'm pretty sure I heard her singing something.

Sometimes riding isn't about the big things, the coast-to-coast hauls or the far-off place with names that defy spelling. Sometimes it's just a few kilometres travelled in an area you already know, among folks you recognize. It's the feeling of doing something that you want to do, for no other reason than it's nice out. The cost is peanuts, yet the gain is substantial.

Sometime down the road I can be assured of two things: My wife will wonder where her riding jacket got to, and my daughter will ask, "Hey Dad, remember the time we rode to the fishing derby?" Both comments will put a smile on my face, and that's a good thing. MM





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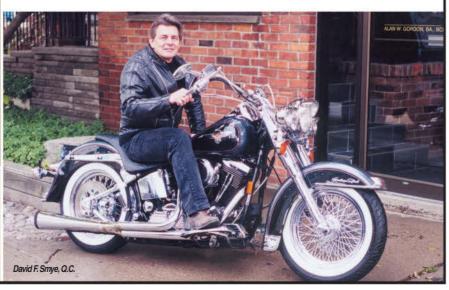
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FAULTY POTHOLES

he guy kept telling me, "It wasn't my fault!" He was waiting to get his bike back from the shop after a crash, and after seeing my bike parked at the coffee shop, he approached me and we started chatting about riding. I am always interested in learning about why riders crash, so I invited him to sit down as I finished my tea. The details help me avoid making the same mistakes, and the info also helps my teaching. This guy hadn't been cut off by another vehicle. He hadn't sped off the road in a curve or been drinking. He had hit a pothole and lost control. He had gone to the hospital with road rash, missed a few days of work and lost his bike to the repair shop

for a few weeks.

I was surprised
when he told me that
he was going to take
legal action. I wondered
whom he was going to
sue, so I asked him. His
reply: "The damn city!"
The personal injury
lawyer he had talked
to seemed to think that
it was the city's fault,
since they owned the
roadway. That did not
completely make sense

to me. When do we stop taking responsibility for our actions? Where do we draw the line where it isn't someone else's fault but actually our own?

Since the city's insurance company would be paying for his damages with some of my money, I decided to debate who was actually responsible for his crash. When I learned he had close to 35 years' experience driving and riding, I pointed out to him that he must have experienced thousands of potholes on



the roads each spring. It turned out that the culprit pothole was one he drove past every day during his commute. I believe we Canadians have some of the best road builders in the world. Winters, especially really cold ones, are very hard on paved surfaces. When a small crack appears, water gets in, freezes, expands and displaces the soil under the pavement. With thawing temperatures come potholes.

Municipal and provincial budgets allocate funds for snow removal and pothole repairs. Potholes are part of spring riding.

What I've suggested to my sons is that they try to identify where potholes are when they are driving their cars in March and April, and then when they get their motorcycles out, they'll at least be prepared to avoid them.

I asked if he had seen the pothole. He said he

had, and had jammed on his brakes but couldn't stop. I didn't want to preach, but panic stopping in traffic for a pothole is nuts. Go around it if you can, and if you're not paying attention or staying too close behind other traffic and you see it at the last second, don't slow down. If anything, give the throttle a little shot to extend the front fork, which lightens the front end. One of the advantages we have as motorcycle riders is we can zip in and out of our tire track to avoid obstacles.

I was almost finished my tea, and my table guest was definitely pissed off with my attitude toward his lawsuit. I asked him one last question. If he had hit a raccoon instead of a pothole, who would he sue? Assuming that the raccoon was not a pet and that its den could be located, probably on public land, would the government be at fault for letting a raccoon cross the road?

We parted company both thinking the other guy was a nut! What do you think? As a society, have we let part of our judicial process become a joke? I am not against personal injury lawyers. If there is gross negligence on the part of the service provider, or in this case the municipal road works department, then the party should be held accountable. The process works if the lawsuit gets in front of a judge, since it is up to the judge to determine negligence, or whether the case is even warranted. I believe the system fails us when it is cheaper for the insurance company to agree to pay a negotiated settlement to avoid a costly trial. The pothole guy suffered injuries, lost pay and incurred costs to fix his bike. I am sympathetic, but was he not responsible for his own actions? I just got back from a tour in Baja, Mexico, where there were no guardrails or warning signs, and seldom speed limit signs. And lots of potholes. Our group leader reminded us that there are no helicopter ambulances and very few hospitals, and if we hit a cow, we would go to jail! We had to be responsible for our own actions. MM

WHERE DO WE
DRAW THE LINE
WHERE IT ISN'T
SOMEONE ELSE'S
FAULT BUT ACTUALLY
OUR OWN?

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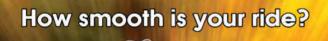


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The Next Generation

Story by **Costa Mouzouris**

The new MotoGP-derived
Yamaha R1 comes with all the
bells and whistles you've come
to expect from a modern
supersport machine - and more





rust the electronics. This is something I began telling myself a long time ago, with the introduction of the first ABS system. It was the first rider aid, and it remained alone in helping riders stay upright until only a few years ago, when traction control was introduced. That prompted me to tell myself again to trust the electronics, and with time, I'm now comfortable with both of these electronic intervention systems.

Well, I recently had to remind myself again to trust a control system other than my own, when riding the 2015 Yamaha YZF-R1. It has ABS and traction control, as well as an all-new control system called slide control.

A Maturing Supersport

The Yamaha YZF-R1 has been around for 17 years. When introduced in 1998, it raised the performance level of the few true open-class supersport machines, and it has been getting consistent upgrades ever since, on average about every two years. The R1 originally used a derivative of the 20-valve inline-four that Yamaha had introduced back in the 1984 FZ750, but has since reverted to a 16-valve inline-four. It is, however, distinguishable from its four-cylinder competition by the use of an odd-firing cross-plane crankshaft, with its twin-like power band and rich, offbeat exhaust note.

This year, it enters its eighth generation, and it's an entirely new machine, receiving more changes than any previous generation. Yamaha claims this latest R1 is more focused on the racetrack than ever before, borrowing heavily from the YZR-M1 MotoGP machine. Revised styling includes a very distinctive fairing that looks headlightless, and the under-tail exhaust has finally moved to below the bike, something other manufacturers have already done, because it makes the exhaust system lighter and moves the weight lower in the chassis.

Yamaha Canada extended an invitation to ride the 2015 R1, and its higher-spec brother, the R1M, at a small, tight racetrack just outside Birmingham, Alabama, called Talladega Gran Prix.

The new 998 cc engine continues to use the cross-plane crankshaft, but now uses a larger bore and shorter stroke, while the engine is 33 mm narrower and 4 kg lighter. European specs put power output at 197 hp at the crank, matching the new BMW S1000RR. Peak torque is 83.2 ft-lb at 11,500 rpm, which is the open-class inline-four average, except that the R1 has a very broad power band. Transmission ratios have been reshuffled, with first through fourth gears being slightly lower, and fifth and sixth slightly higher than before.

Steering geometry has been tweaked to improve corner entry, turning transitions and front-end feel. The fully adjustable suspension components on the R1 come courtesy of KYB, while the R1M uses

an electrically adjustable semi-active suspension from Öhlins.

Lean-Sensing Electronics

And then there are the electronics, which are now at a level required on machines approaching 200 hp. There are nine levels of lean-angle-sensing traction control, there's three-level wheelie control, two-level launch control, and semi-linked cornering ABS (the rear brake works independently). Those are the rider aids. Then there's the racy stuff, like a two-level quick shifter, four selectable power modes. But there's also that one electronic aid that is unique - for now - to the R1: three-level slide control. All of the rider aids can be turned off, they're managed through a new, configurable 10.6 cm TFT colour display. That's a lot of electronics, which would otherwise be a convoluted mess to sort through when selecting modes and adjusting settings, but Yamaha has done a stellar job of making the user interface remarkably simple.

Unexpectedly, and rather gratifyingly, I was to share the track with only one other journalist for the day, and the weather was cooperating with sunny skies and warm temperatures. I began the day on the standard R1, and set the traction control to its most intrusive setting, just to see what it felt like. It felt exactly as expected: absolutely normal and invisible. Power mode was set to level 3, which permitted full power (level 4 limits overall output), but with a very smooth power delivery. Twisting the throttle hard while exiting corners provided very strong yet smooth acceleration. The only indication that something was managing the throttle other than me was the flashing TC light in the dash, which flashed almost constantly until the bike straightened out. Otherwise, by the seat of my pants, everything felt normal.

Turning it up to the most aggressive

level 1, the R1 felt like a true openclasser, and a brutish one at that. Power doesn't come on with the explosive blast of the Panigale 1299, but the bike feels as though it has a much stronger bottom end than the BMW S1000RR or the Honda CBR1000RR, which I had also ridden recently. I also turned down the traction control to level 6 and again felt nothing out of the ordinary, except that the TC light was now illuminating less frequently, despite the more forceful corner exits. With each successive session, I turned the TC to lower settings, eventually settling on level 3, which provided very forceful corner exits, with the TC light only flickering occasionally, and only in a couple of corners.

Slide Control

The bikes were equipped with Bridgestone's new RS10 radials, which provided exceptional grip and feedback, though the track's abrasive



Lean-sensing electronics like traction control, slide control and ABS can save your bacon on a 200 hp machine when leaned over.



The pilot has all amenities at their finger tips including an intuitive and easy to navigate TFT display.

pavement wore them out before noon, so new rears were installed during the lunch break. Despite this elevated grip, the bike did begin to squirm a bit when pushed really hard through the corners, though things got very interesting as soon as the slide control was turned on, albeit in its most intrusive level 3.

Slide control uses the bike's six-axis gyros and G-force sensors to override the traction control and allow the rear tire to spin up, while limiting that wheel spin to allow controllable slides. It was rather by accident that I discovered this, because I didn't know the slide control was on the first time I actually used it.

During one of my later morning sessions on the R1M, I hammered the throttle exiting a long, third-gear left-hander that opened up at the exit, the way I had done in previous sessions. This time, though, the rear end stepped out, surprising me, but not enough to let up on the gas. The bike slid out and regained traction without incident, so I initially thought there was maybe a glitch in the TC. On the next lap, I gassed it even harder at that same corner to test the TC, which I had by now trusted, and the R1M slid out again, smoothly and for what felt like a long time before straightening out as I levelled out the bike. I discovered later in the pits that the slide control was on.

It was time to experiment even more. With the slide control again at level 3, hammering the throttle at corner exits instantly led to controlled rear-wheel slides, as long as I stayed on the throttle, which I dared not shut off despite my instincts yelling at me to do so. The slide control isn't a feature that will make you lap any faster, nor will it actually

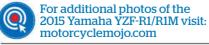
teach you how to control the throttle in a slide, but it sure is fun to use!

Although the tight track didn't initially seem adequate to test a near-200 hp supersport machine, it actually provided more info and allowed for more experimentation than a standard press launch at a super-fast European circuit would have, where track time is limited by much larger groups of riders.

Advancing With Its Peers

With the added horsepower and the extensive electronics package, the R1 is now on par in performance and technological advances with bikes like the BMW S1000RR, the Ducati Panigale 1299, the Kawasaki ZX-10R and the Aprilia RSV4 R. The only thing I found the R1 is missing is a downshift capability on the quick-shift system. After sampling this system on the BMW and Ducati, it has proven to be a very convenient rider aid that will actually help drop lap times. But it's not a deal breaker, and between a quick-downshift feature and Yamaha's slide control, I would take the slide control hands down.

This class-matching performance and technology comes at a price, and the 2015 YZF-R1 now costs \$18,999, which is \$4,000 more than it cost in 2014. The R1M costs another four grand above that. But that's what a modern supersport with close to 200 hp and advanced electronics costs these days. And it seems that a number of sportbike riders don't mind, because the R1M has already sold out. MM



2015 YAMAHA YZF-R1/R1M



LIST PRICE

YZF-R1 - \$18,999; YZF-R1M - \$22,999 WARRANTY

12-month, unlimited mileage

CONTACT

vamaha-motor.ca

ENGINE TYPE

16-valve, inline-four

DISPLACEMENT

998 cc

POWER

197 hp (147.1 kW) at 13,500 rpm (Euro spec)

TORQUE

83.2 ft-lb (112.8 Nm) at 11.500 rpm

BORE AND STROKE

79 x 50.9 mm

COMPRESSION RATIO

13:1

FUEL DELIVERY

Mikuni twin-injector 45 mm throttle body

TRANSMISSION

6-speed

FINAL DRIVE TYPE

Chain

FRONT SUSPENSION

R1: Fully adjustable 43 mm inverted fork R1M: Öhlins Electronic Racing Suspension

43mm inverted fork

REAR SUSPENSION

R1: Fully adjustable bottom link Monocross R1M: Öhlins Electronic Racing Suspension bottom link Monocross

WHEEL TRAVEL

Front: 120 mm (4.7 in.); Rear: 120 mm (4.7 in.) BRAKES

Front: Dual 320 mm discs with

4-piston calipers;

Rear: 220 mm disc with single-piston caliper

WHEELBASE

1405 mm (55.3 in.)

RAKE AND TRAIL

24 degrees/102 mm

TIRES

R1: Front: 120/70ZR17; Rear: 190/55ZR17 R1M: Front: 120/70ZR17; Rear: 200/55ZR17

WEIGHT (WET)

R1: 199 kg (439 lb); R1M: 201 kg (443 lb) SEAT HEIGHT

R1: 855 mm (33.7 in.); R1M: 860 mm (33.9 in.)

FUEL CAPACITY

17 litres

FUEL ECONOMY (CLAIMED)

6.94 L/100 km

FUEL RANGE (ESTIMATED)

245 km



Story and Photos by **Terry Peters**

Life and Near Death on the Open Road

In search of routes less travelled



he quiet of the empty stretch of highway was interrupted by the sound of the approaching truck. As I sat on the paved shoulder checking my map, I kept an eye on the increasingly bigger white object in my mirror. As it approached, the wheels began to stray over the white line marking the shoulder. There was no time to start the bike. The truck filled my mirror and I thought, Shit, it's going to hit me!





A beautiful stretch of Coos Beach, California. (left) A deer keeps an eye on the campers in Joseph H. Stewart State Recreation Area, Oregon. (above)

Seven days earlier I was sitting in the border line-up headed south from Vancouver, B.C., to begin a week-long road trip. We were on our way to Northern California, looking for new roads. I was on my 2007 BMW R1200GS and my riding buddy Michael was on his 2004 adventure model of the same bike. We used to be faster, riding all over the western States on our Kawasaki ZRX1200Rs, but had moved on to dual-sport bikes; we were now less concerned with how many kilometres we racked up in a day and more interested in getting farther into the countryside.

The first day started with an enjoyable ride through the Cascade



parking lot becomes an impromptu shop as Michael tops up his leaking brake fluid.

A Walmart

Mountains of Washington State on the spectacular Hwy 20. Towering peaks, sweeping curves and great pavement eventually gave way to the long descent into arid countryside. We arrived in Twisp for lunch before following Hwy 97 south to Ellensburg and catching the start of the amazing State Route 821 as it hugged the winding Yakima River that runs through the rock-walled canyon. We camped beside the river in one of the many state campgrounds for the bargain price of \$14.

It was great to begin the next day's ride in the middle of this twisty road, and after breakfast in Yakima, we headed west on Hwy 12 beside the Tieton River and ancient lava fields before reaching Rimrock Lake. The road takes you over Washington's White Pass at an elevation of 1370 metres, offering some fantastic views of Mount Rainier.

Off the Beaten Path

At Randle, we turned south and moved from a secondary highway to something less popular. Highway 23 began as a beautiful two-lane paved route that travelled through dense forests. With the branches from the trees on both

sides joining together overhead, we rode through this stunning canopy and the dappled light it created as the road narrowed to a single lane, and then the asphalt disappeared. After 50 km of varying surface conditions, we were back on pavement and headed south to White Salmon and the Oregon border.

The Bridge of the Gods is a toll bridge built in 1926 over the Columbia River, and I felt like praying to them as the bike twitched beneath me along the 565-metre metal grated surface. The afternoon was getting hot and we stopped to cool off in the east fork of the Hood River. We often stop to swim, finding it refreshes and recharges us for the journey ahead.

At Clear Lake, we turned onto Forest Service Road 42, a lonely stretch of tarmac amidst old-growth forest that served as our own private route through a national park. Service roads were our main focus and we looked for them whenever they might take us in the right direction. You need a detailed map to locate them, like the Butler motorcycle maps I prefer, but stopping at any of the ranger stations will provide info on the immediate area.

The ride to Detroit, Oregon, on Hwy 46 was loaded with great curves and gorgeous views, and we finished the day there with a burger at the Korner Post Restaurant & Steel Wheels Lounge, distinguishable as a motorcycle-friendly establishment by the motorcycles atop its roof.

Waking up to a cool morning and heavy dew on the bikes, we headed south on Hwy 22 and then 126, enjoying the curves as it wound its way down to McKenzie Bridge and then Rainbow. Later we joined Forest Service Road 19, which ended at the little town of Westfir, with its small covered bridge built in 1945.

At Oakridge, we connected with Hwy 21's smooth surface and wonderful curves, which deposited us at a most interesting swimming location. We'd just gotten in the water when several huge fish jumped nearby. In a flash, Michael had his fishing rod out and bait in the water, but the session amounted to nothing more than casting practice, as none of the monsters showed any interest.

Fire in the Sky

Late in the day near Union Creek, the sky had turned a rich orange. Sadly, it was due to forest fires in the area. We made camp a short while later in Joseph H. Stewart State Park, where I awoke the next day with eyes irritated and throat sore, as if I'd been leaning to close to a campfire.

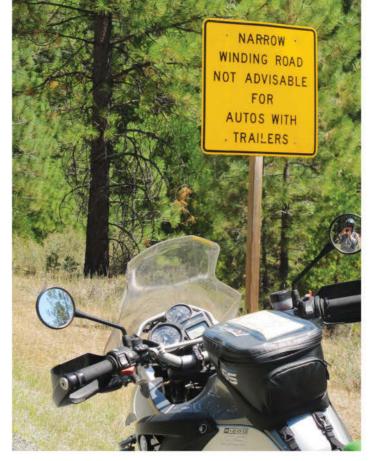
We always look for local restaurants to start the day, because it's a great opportunity to soak up the atmosphere and often leads to tips on alternate routes. In Shady Cove, we found just what we were looking for at breakfast in Mac's Diner.

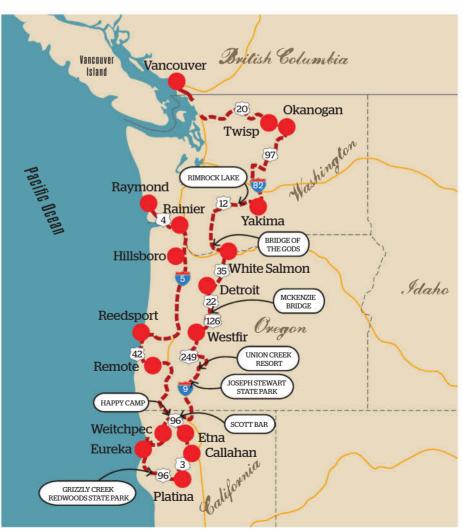
Crossing the state line into California, we got onto State Route 96, following the Klamath River and twisting our way toward Happy Camp. A rather ironic title given it was known as "Murderers Bar" during the 1800s, thanks to ongoing clashes between miners and the Native Americans of the Karuk Tribe.

We continued south on State Route 96, enjoying the curves of this road, many of which had been carved out of the canyon walls above the Trinity River.

At Somes Bar, we were forced to

When looking to ride off the beaten path, this is the kind of signs to look for.







A hazy sunset thanks to smoke from nearby forest fires.

change our plans, as the forest fires had closed the road we'd wanted to ride to Callahan. Instead, we went through Orleans before stopping for gas in Weitchpec and finding Bald Hills Road to take us to Orick.

The first few kilometres were paved and loaded with tight switchbacks leading us into a deep forest. The road soon turned to gravel and eventually emerged into open, rolling hills. Once again, we were riding with no other vehicles in sight and had a great time on the loose surface. When the pavement returned, so did the tight curves, and we were leaning the BMWs like our ZRXs when the brake warning light on Michael's bike came on. He quickly located a loose brake-line connection that was leaking fluid. Tightening the connection stopped the leak, but it needed more fluid.

Roadside Repair

A motorcycle shop in Eureka had the correct brake fluid, and a Walmart parking lot became the repair location. Michael had the brakes bled and refilled in short order and we were on our way – this time with heated vests plugged in, as reaching the coast meant

we'd found the cold fog, and riding down Hwy 101 had turned into a chilly proposition. After getting some food, we set up at the campground in Grizzly Creek Redwoods State Park.

An early start meant riding in the fog, but soon Hwy 36 climbed up into the sunshine. The road just got better and better as the curves through the hills got tighter. Kilometre after kilometre of exhilarating riding finished off my fuel and we coasted into a little gas station/restaurant outside Platina. It seemed like a perfect combo, until we had to deal with the grumpiest waitress we'd ever met.

Once fuelled up, we back-tracked a few kilometres to County Road 302 (Wildwood Road), a quiet route through gorgeous redwood forests connecting with Hwy 3 and offering some of the best riding of the trip. If I were to make a riding wish list, it would look like that road.

We went through Weaverville and continued on Hwy 3 to Trinity Center

before stopping in Callahan for a cold drink and a chat with the owner at the Emporium. The store is attached to an old and very authentic bar, beside which are the remains of a Wells Fargo depot, complete with ancient metal doors and barred windows. Founded in 1852, the once bustling gold rush town now has a population of 50 and is on the verge of becoming a ghost town. In 1947, it was the location of what is the last known lynching in California.

With limited choices from Callahan because of the fires, we rode to Etna and branched off onto Scott River Road. The two lanes became a single track carved into the hillside with a 150-metre drop to the river below. At one point, I rounded a tight corner to come face to face with two small deer standing on the road. Fortunately, caution had dictated slow speeds, and both animals and humans escaped without injury. This road eventually took us into Scott Bar and then on to Hamburg, where we rejoined State Route 96 into Happy Camp, and then headed north back into Oregon on Hwy 199.

Commando Camping

Riding later than planned with no sign of a campground, we pulled off the road in the dark and parked behind an abandoned building in a field. I'm not a huge fan of commando camping, but it's less risky than dodging wildlife at night.

Packed and on the road early meant plugging in the electric vests again and being thankful for heated grips.

Our route took us on fabulous gravel roads through the hills before deposit-

> ing us at the coast and a chilly ride up U.S. Route 101.

At Reedsport, we headed back inland on Smith River Road, along narrowing pavement through thick forests. We worked our way up to Hillsboro and eventually found a campsite just after dark.

The next morning would be our last together on this adventure, as Michael needed to get home by the afternoon.

Since I was in no hurry, we parted ways at Rainier, with him taking the interstate and me getting on Hwy 6.

It was a cool, blue-sky morning, and outside of Raymond I had pulled over to look at my map. Surrounded by farm fields, I'd stopped on a clear section of road and had the bike on the side stand on the paved shoulder studying my route.

Flashing Before Your Eyes

I noticed a white delivery truck in my rearview mirror and divided my attention between the map and my mirror. As the truck got closer, I could see it drift toward the shoulder, and then the tires started to cross over the white line. I let go of the map, grabbed the handlebar and stood the bike up. The truck was on top of me and I thought, Shit, it's going to hit me! I leaned the bike away from the road as the flash of white streaked past so close that I could feel the truck scrape up against the end of my extended highway peg.

I was shocked to see the truck speed off as if nothing had happened, leaving me charged full of adrenaline, my heart pounding from the incredibly close call. The left foot peg showing paint from the truck that scraped against it at highway speed.

I started the bike and roared off, quickly catching up as the truck drove into Raymond. It stopped in a bank parking lot, and I was off the bike and at the driver's door before he was outside the truck. I started yelling at him, telling him how he almost killed me. He had no idea how close he'd come to hitting me and likely ripping my leg off. I was furious, but his ignorance of what had happened gave my anger nothing to strike out at. I shouted for a while longer, and this overweight, middle-aged man put his hand on my shoulder and said, "I'm sorry." I had nothing left after that.

Just outside of town I had to pull over. I was shaking and the image of the truck going past my face, just inches away, kept replaying in my head. If I hadn't leaned away, he would have hit me at 60 mph.

Afraid of how my voice might sound

at that moment, I chose to send my wife, daughter and several others immediately on my mind a text message, rather than a call, to let them know I loved them and would be home soon.

The rest of the day was somber but the sun was still shining when I rolled into my driveway and put the bike into the garage. I was home safe and sound but I was changed.

I can't help but feel that some things happen for a reason, and that day my reaction time provided me with a future that was almost taken away. I was left with a feeling that I had a lot more life in front of me, that I had even more faith in myself, and confidence that when challenged I would make the right decision. **MM**



A covered bridge near Oakridge,
Oregon. (above)
A good map or a ranger station
can tell you how to find roads
like this forest service road just
off the Smith River Road near
Reedsport, Oregon. (right)



Reinventing Tradition?

The Motor Company shocked the motorcycle world when it announced an electric motorcycle. No one saw that coming

Story by Misti Hurst





DISTINCT SOUND

Just like the unique sound of the company's V-twins, the jet turbine sound of the LiveWire was designed into it.

FOCAL POINT

The designers and engineers made the LiveWire's motor the highlight of the vehicle.

EXACTING TOLERANCES

Even though it's a prototype, the LiveWire has been produced to the same exacting standards as if it were any other production Harley-Davidson.

THE FUTURE OF MOTORCYCLING?

The touch-screen TFT displays battery voltage, battery temperature, ECU temperature, time to full charge, power or range mode and battery charge level.

RIDER OPINIONS

The Motor Company is carefully recording rider feedback to determine if it is even feasible to put LiveWire into production. As of now, there is no plan or timeline in place to manufacture the electric motorcycle.





Sleek, bold styling, with clean lines and a strong, streetfighter look, the LiveWire has no gearbox, so therefore no clutch lever to pull or gears to change. There is also no rumbling, vibrating, traditional-sounding growly engine between your legs; the machine is virtually silent when running. That is, until you wind on the throttle and hear the high-pitched turbine-like whine - which Harley says was as carefully designed as the rest of the bike - as you propel forward with instant torque.

Expanding Brand Definition

Project LiveWire is Harley-Davidson's way of redefining its historic brand and leading the way in innovative technology. This is a reinvention of the way we ride.

LiveWire's first stop in Canada was at Barnes Harley-Davidson in Langley, B.C., and I was lucky enough to be one of a select handful of Canadians to be the first in the country to ride the motorcycle

> as part of the Project LiveWire Experience tour. You see, the LiveWire isn't a production bike, but rather a concept, a prototype made specifically to test the waters of reinvention and product development by utilizing consumers' opinions and ideas as a way of innovatively launching Harley-Davidson into the future of electric motorcycles.

Even those who don't ride can sample Project LiveWire by hopping on the Jumpstart riding simulator. The Experience tour began in the United States in 2014 and is continuing this year, this time also visiting Canada and Europe.

SYSTEM STATUS BATTERY VOLTAGE BATTERY TEMP ECU TEMP 69 F TIME to FULL CHARGE 69 F 0 min

Looking more like an iPad than a motorcycle instrument cluster, the LiveWire offers pertinent information in the System Status screen

Designing for the Future

With nearly two dozen gleaming prototypes ready to be taken for a ride, I felt as though I could have been on the set of Avengers: Age of Ultron. Somehow Harley-Davidson managed to retain the iconic look of what we expect from them in a modernized, flat-black, café racer-styled machine that just happens to run on a 220-volt, longitudinally mounted electric motor powered by a lithium-

ion battery. From the single-piece cast-aluminum frame and swingarm to the TFT dashboard and LED headlight, each detail is of carefully crafted quality.

After listening to a short audiovisual presentation about the LiveWire, it was nearly time to head out on our ride. Throwing a leg over, I was surprised to find that the bike was smaller than it looked, with a slim, streamlined body and a low seat height. I could easily sit flat-footed and it was a comfortable reach to the handlebars.

Power Up

From there, we were instructed to switch the button to ON, which powers up the modern LED touch-screen display - more reminiscent of an iPhone than a motorcycle dashboard - and told to select either Range or Sport mode. I didn't even hesitate to choose the Sport mode before pressing the traditional-like starter button. With a soft whir, the three-phase AC motor was activated and the bike was running. Or was it? With no sound whatsoever coming from the motor, it was a real shift in mindset for me to remember that the bike was in fact on and very ready to go.

As the lead rider pulled out, I eagerly rolled on the throttle to take the first position in line and had to remind myself that there was no clutch. It seemed dumbed down, a simplified version of a motorcycle that only needed a little twist of the wrist to make it go, and go fast. They're not kidding when they boast about the torque and the fact that it can go from zero to 100 km/h in less than four seconds. This is a very fast and deceitful motorcycle that hides its instant torque and available power under a blanket of silence. I can see the appeal of such stealthy simplicity, especially for commuting. It's a beautifully deceptive motorcycle.

The Ride Was Too Short

During the short ride, the LiveWire seemed to handle extremely well, with accurate and predictable steering. It didn't feel particularly heavy or light for that matter, just easy to navigate. It did what it was told. I wanted more than just 15 minutes on the thing. At one point we were on a roundabout and I felt like embracing the rebellious nature of a Harley-Davidson and ditching the group ride and rail it around the traffic circle over and over in an attempt to see what the LiveWire could really do. I wanted to see how far it could lean over, how stable the upside-down Showa Big Piston fork and fully adjustable cantilever shock felt at speed, what it would feel like to touch my knee to the ground; but I reluctantly followed the rules. It felt sporty and fast, as if it could certainly hold its own on the racetrack.

One thing that stood out was the regenerative braking, which is similar to strong engine braking. When you close the throttle to decelerate, the electric motor turns into a generator to recharge the battery. This is instantaneous and quite sudden (something they warn you about in the presentation), so you don't need to use much traditional braking, except for when you come to a complete stop. This could be an issue

if the bike actually went into production. If you don't engage the brakes, the brake lights won't come on, so people behind you won't know that you are slowing down, perhaps until it's too late. Maybe an integrated system that engages the brake lights when you close the throttle would be helpful. The single-disc, pin-slide, twin-piston front brake stopped the LiveWire easily, but again, I didn't get a chance to forcefully grab a fistful. There is no ABS on the prototype model.

The range of the bike after 3.5 hours to fully charge the battery is approximately 80 km with a limited top speed of around 148 km/h. Seventy-four horses power the LiveWire with 52 ft-lb of torque, and it tips the scales at roughly 208 kg.

Production Depends on Feedback

There are no guestimates as to how much the LiveWire might cost, because it isn't in production. Harley-Davidson will use the information gathered from consumers in its "post-test-ride survey" to decide if and when the bike may be available for sale. In the meantime, it remains a beautiful work of mechanical art that a lucky few of us have had the chance to ride and would love to see it come to fruition, as a way for us all to ride off into the future. MM

Lined up and ready to ride.

Misti enjoyed riding the LiveWire
but wanted more and even
considered breaking away from
the pack and heading out
on her own ride.





PHOTOS BY GLENN ROBERTS; PHOTO ON WHITE IS EUROPEAN MODEL





Choosing the path of Evolution over Revolution



ust a decade ago, if you wanted an adventure bike that could comfortably cover long distances on the tarmac or get a little dirty on logging roads and modest trails, there was a handful of choices, and two of them were Suzuki V-Strom DLs. Today, you could throw a rock and topple several fashionably dressed riders, each astride different adventure bikes, and I'd bet they'd all knock over their riding buddies' BMW GSs on the way down.

INCLUDED THREE-PIECE aluminum panniers set with brackets, engine guards, bash plate and hand guards give the new V-Strom DL650X ABS EXP a head start for riders looking to purchase a ready-to-ride

WIRE-SPOKED aluminumalloy wheels with tubeless

radial tires absorb impacts

and resist damage better than cast wheels.

adventure bike.

This glut of dual-purpose motorcycles has many of the manufacturers now clamouring to give customers new toys and gadgets with which to fettle and fiddle on a yearly basis. So why has Suzuki – at one time the outright sales leader in the segment – continued to favour a methodical and reactionary evolution for the DL650?

Some guy named Darwin once notably observed: Animals of the same species can adapt to their environmental conditions, resulting in changes that make them more likely to succeed. Like those now famous finches from Darwin's writings and their remarkable adaptations, the 2015 V-Strom 650 finds itself in very competitive territory and, out of necessity, has sprouted

another branch off the V-Strom family tree.

Much of the DL650 has remained unchanged since the major 2012 update, and in most cases, that's a good thing. The instrument cluster is one of my favourites, with a large centrally mounted tachometer and a proper needle to watch swing toward the red, and the digital portion is clear and easy to read.

Covering long distances on the DL has always been a pleasure, and that's another reason I'm glad they haven't messed around with it too much. This could be one of the best seats ever, and it's narrow enough at the front to allow even me, at five feet seven inches with a 30-inch inseam, to get more than just my toes on the ground at a stop.

The controls and switchgear are familiar and could be called classically Suzuki. The handlebar on the DL650 has always been awkward for me, placing my hands too close together. Then again, I prefer a wide bar and would install one if this were my everyday ride and I intended to do some adventuring. It just makes standing on the pegs more comfortable, allowing me added leverage, and given this new bike's aspirations, I think people will be spending a lot more time standing up on the 650X than on any prior V-Strom.

The new-for-2015 DL650X ABS EXP is the first of the DLs to take that step toward being a proper on/off-road bike, and at first glance, Suzuki appears to have put together a pretty comprehensive package for customers in search of a ready-to-ride adventure bike. Included with the 650X EXP version are the adjustable Vario windshield, hand guards, bash plate, engine guards, and



An ingenious spoke system allows the wheel and tire to be tubeless permitting easier on-the-road puncture repairs.







The front fork's adjustable preload and large aluminum cases make the DL650X EXP a worthy mount for long distance and a variety of road surfaces.

cast variety found on other DL650s, and do a better job of soaking up hard impacts and resisting damage from said jolts.

Admittedly, spoked wheels have been on the DL owner's wish list for a long while, but that wait has made them all the more sweet, and after a few days of tooling around, both on and off-road, I can say unequivocally, it's about damn time.

The stock Trail Wing tires do a fine job on the road, providing good dry-weather grip, and they dealt with gravel roads and hard-packed dirt trails with ease. In stock trim, it's best to avoid deep sand or mud altogether, as those should be left to more off-road-oriented tires; thankfully, the new larger 19-inch front rim opens up a bigger selection of rubber for just such intentions.

Equally adept at handling a variety of duties are the spring-preload-adjust-able 43 mm front fork and link-type rear suspension with rebound and spring preload adjustment. "Gliding over bumps" is the description that kept popping up in my ride notes, though I did make a couple of adjustments right off the bat, based on many hours aboard the current generation V-Stroms.

Cranking up the rear shock's preload

has been my standard practice when getting on any DL over the years; it helps the bike to settle faster after large bumps, especially with luggage or a passenger on the back. The five-position knob is easy to reach and took just a couple of turns to find the right setting.

The suspension at the front is composed, requiring only a small tweak on the spring-preload adjuster to firm up the ride and limit some of the tendency to dive under braking. This fairly basic suspension handled washboard-rippled surfaces on the worst of back roads, and I never managed to stress it enough to find a complaint.

An Old Friend

Dual 310 mm front discs and twopiston calipers feel like old friends who've almost outstayed their welcome, but you wouldn't doubt them for a second in a jam. Feedback at the lever is good right up to the moment mild pulsing from the standard ABS kicks in, taking most of the drama out of panicked stops.

The rear brake works well on the road, and I found myself using it often. In the dirt and on gravel it feels really good, even with thick-soled boots on, and the ABS pulses just enough to let you know it's working. The ability to deactivate the rear ABS would be my number one request of Suzuki's engineers, just so the back end could be slid around to aid tight turns on loose surfaces.

Punching out approximately 68 peak horsepower and 44 ft-lb of torque, the V-Strom's venerable 645 cc dual-spark 90-degree V-twin has all the character, practicality and performance that a middleweight motorcycle could hope for. According to the marketing material, engineers have focused on producing strong bottom-end and mid-range power, which when referring to a V-twin is like saying the giraffe has the best view at the zoo. Where those statements become less obvious is in the saddle while grabbing a handful of throttle in third gear, just off idle; even with the luggage bolted on and my 200 lb frame in the saddle, the "wee-strom" still managed to sprint from 40 to 100 km/h in about four seconds. And when repeating

aluminum panniers with brackets and the top box. Oh, and of course it also comes complete with the now standard calling card of the category: a beak.

Beginnings of the Beak

It should be noted – and often is by Suzuki representatives – the first beaked bike appeared in the form of Suzuki's DR-Z competing in the 1988 Paris-Dakar rally. For 2015, the DL650X borrows from the past, sprouting a beak of its own, which, when viewed from the side, causes the V-Strom's profile to bear an uncanny resemblance to the Toronto Blue Jays mascot, Ace.

Celebrity doppelgänger status aside, the look isn't unattractive, especially when your gaze descends to the newfor-2015 spoked wheels, carrying tubeless Bridgestone Trail Wing dual-sport tires. These wheels are lighter than the the roll-on exercise in fourth and fifth gears, the result was expectedly slower, but similarly impressive.

Besides the new wheels, my favourite change to this generation of V-Strom is the single key that operates the locks on the panniers and the top box. No more individual keys for each box – there's now one to rule them all!

The aluminum boxes all open from the top and have robust gaskets to seal out moisture. One of the side cases is smaller to accommodate the exhaust, but with three bags in total, there's more than enough room to carry any reasonable load. Unfortunately, they stick out a good 12 cm past the bar ends on each side and make negotiating tight spaces interesting. On a positive note, they prop the bike up nicely when it's fallen over.

Picking a bike back up, dusting it off and carrying on is something many DL owners have experienced. Come to think of it, there are probably very few places in the world where that hasn't happened. One of the great benefits of V-Strom ownership is the huge number of fellow owners happy to share information, advice and support. The model's long track record is very much due to the people who continue to purchase it. And how many times have you heard someone say, "I hate

my V-Strom"? Probably never.

Everything about the 2015 DL650X ABS EXP works well, from the comfortable and slim seat to the odd but effective Vario windshield. It's all been honed over time through the feedback of an army of fans.

Suzuki could very easily bestow it with the best of everything cutting edge, but the company knows full well that if it ain't broke, don't go and make it cost twice as much. And there's the reasoning behind the V-Strom's evolutionary track. While others are trying to lure buyers with high performance at high prices, Suzuki is offering value and competent performance, just as it has since the model debuted in 2004. This 2015 V-Strom DL650X ABS EXP takes all the good that came before and adds a little more, without screwing with the formula.

It's not always the fastest, the strongest or the most conspicuous of the breed that succeed; often it's the ability to endure, and the DL650 does just that. As a result, consumers naturally continue to make this bike their selection. **MM**



For additional photos of the 2015 Suzuki V-Strom DL650X ABS EXP visit: motorcyclemojo.com



2015 SUZUKI V-STROM DL650X ABS EXP



LIST PRICE

\$11,399

WARRANTY

1 year, unlimited mileage

CONTACT

suzuki.ca

ENGINE TYPE

Liquid-cooled V-twin

DISPLACEMENT

645 cc

POWER (EURO SPEC)

68 hp (50.5 kW) at 8800 rpm

TORQUE (EURO SPEC)

44 ft-lb (60 Nm) at 6400 rpm

BORE AND STROKE

81 x 62.6 mm

COMPRESSION RATIO

11.2:1

FUEL DELIVERY

Electronic fuel injection

TRANSMISSION

6-speed

FINAL DRIVE

Chain

FRONT SUSPENSION

43 mm conventional fork adjustable

for preload

REAR SUSPENSION

Link-type, coil spring, oil-damped adjustable for preload and rebound damping

WHEEL TRAVEL

Front: 150 mm (5.9 in.); Rear: 159 mm (6.2 in.)

BRAKES

Front: Dual 310 mm discs with 2-piston calipers; Rear: 260 mm disc with

single-piston caliper

WHEELBASE

1560 mm (61.4 in.)

RAKE AND TRAIL

26 degrees/110 mm

TIRES

Front: 110/80R19, tubeless

Rear: 150/70R17H, tubeless

WEIGHT (WET)

215 kg (474 lb), including EXP accessories

SEAT HEIGHT

835 mm (32.9 in.)

FUEL CAPACITY

20 L

FUEL ECONOMY (OBSERVED)

4.5 L/100 km

FUEL RANGE (ESTIMATED)

444 km

Think you've got what it takes?

Whether you're a hard-core adventurist or you just like to dabble on dirt roads, this rally has something for everyone





f you're into adventure or dualsport riding, and you happen to be in New Brunswick in September, the Fundy Adventure Rally is a great diversion that will get you into the wilderness, as well as test your riding skills and perseverance.

The Fundy Adventure Rally is open to teams of two to five riders, and it takes you on a 500 km trek through some of the province's most picturesque trails. It's headquartered at Adair's Wilderness Lodge, located Kelly's Bake Shop just south of Sussex, where you can rent a room or a cabin, or pitch a tent.

You'll Need the **Proper Bike**

"Home of the Sticky Bun I teamed up with former Toronto Star Wheels editor Mark Richardson last year and can attest that it is both fun and challenging. But

preparation is key, as the rally starts at 7 a.m. and wraps up 12 hours later. We each rode a BMW F800GS, and the bikes, which were provided by BMW Motorrad Canada, were equipped with Continental TKC80 dual-sport tires. Aggressive tires, like the TKCs, are recommended, because the conditions can get rough and rocky.

Although the organizer, CanadaMotoGuide.com's Rob Harris, claims that the route is easy enough for novice riders, its length makes it challenging even for veteran off-road riders. Weather conditions can also affect the difficulty, and last year's early morning departure was in thick fog, which unfortunately blocked the otherwise glorious view along the Fundy Trail Parkway, the only paved portion of the route aside from when we entered towns.

Some Experience Needed

Navigation is by GPS, and the routes are handed out during the morning briefing. Because some of the areas you ride through are quite remote, the organizer provides the use of SPOT satellite tracking devices - one per team - to keep a watchful eye on competitors throughout the day. The rally is not a race, so speed is not a factor, but there are points to be gathered, and there are optional skill-testing routes meant for seasoned off-road riders. Early in the rally, Mark and I decided to take some of the optional routes to gauge

their difficulty before deciding if we'd do them all, mostly because it had been

several years since my teammate had ridden off-road.

The most difficult option, we were told, was a long, steep, rocky downhill, which we had decided to forgo. A wrong turn, however, pointed us down that

long, rocky hill, much to Mark's chagrin. Fortunately, we made it without incident, and as

a reward for surviving our miscue, we stopped at Kelly's Bake Shop, in Alma, for a couple of its thick, and almost criminally delicious sticky buns.

Blame It on the Sticky Buns

Fresh Homemade Breads,

Pies & Pasteries

(506) 887-2460

Although the rally focuses more on fun than competition, you've got to plan your day well, keep moving and keep the stops short. Of the 15 teams entered in the 2014 event, only six finished all

FAST FACTS

DETAILS FOR THIS YEAR'S RALLY

FundyAdventureRally.com runs September 10-13 at Adair's Wilderness Lodge, New Brunswick (just south of Sussex). The main ride is on the 12th.

THE INAUGURAL YEAR

The 2014 rally saw 61 entries; 15 solo riders, 46 in teams. Most entries were from the Maritimes, though eight came from Ontario, four from the U.S. and three from Quebec.

MOST COMMON BIKE ENTERED

Most common brand was BMW (19 - main sponsor), most common bike was the KLR650 (10), smallest bike was the TW200 and largest was the R1200GS.

THE ROUTE

Approximately a 500 km loop with eight legs (each ending at a gas station), to be completed in a 12-hour period.

NAVIGATION BY GPS.

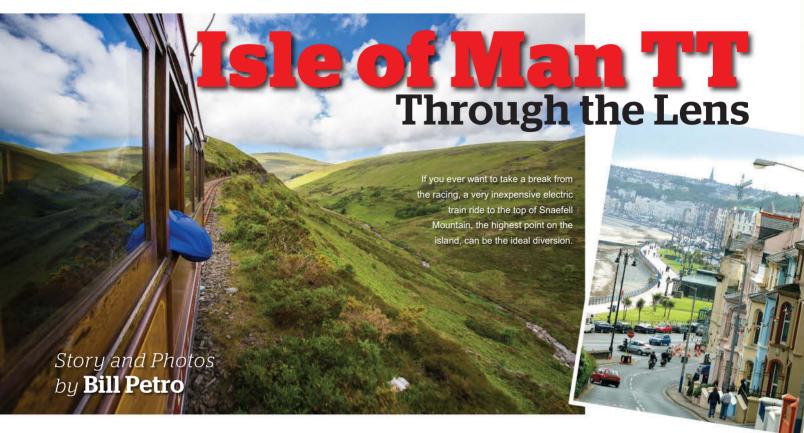
Each leg comprises two route options; the 'A' route (for solo rider and teams) is a mix of gravel and paved roads with a sweep truck, 'B' routes (teams only) are tougher and consist mainly of gravel and logging roads and don't have a sweep truck, but each team has a SPOT tracking device. B routes offer points depending on level of difficulty.

The team with the most points wins the rally.

the options within the allotted time; the others had chosen the bail-out routes, which offer a more direct route back to Adair's. My advice is that you don't make the same mistake Mark and I made. Thanks to our extended stop to weigh down on Kelly's sticky buns, we had to bail. mm



You might want to ride with someone who can perform trailside repairs.



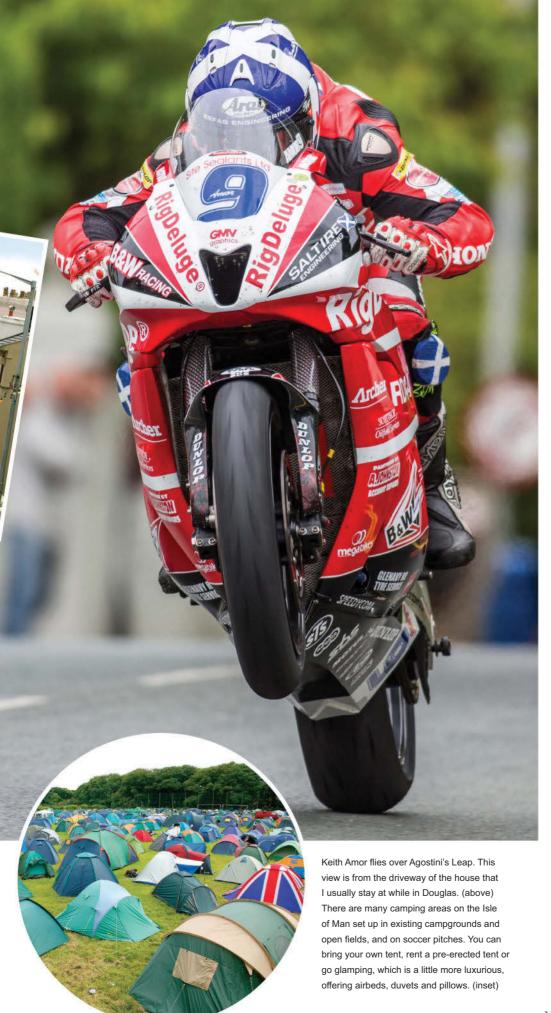
They say a picture tells a thousand words. We thought we'd share a few thousand words showing the diversity of the two-week Isle of Man TT race festival

ince 1907, the Isle of Man Tourist Trophy race has been testing the skill of the riders and the endurance and reliability of motorcycles on the 37.73-mile (60.7 km) course. Running from May 30 to June 12 of this year, the Isle of Man TT is like no other race in the world as it winds through mountain roads and village streets with buildings and trees right at the road's edge. John McGuiness set a new single lap record in 2015 with a time of 17 minutes 3.567 seconds at an average speed of 132.701 mph (213.56 km/h). Remarkable when you consider the Superbike class is six laps. It really is the greatest race on earth.



Looking down on the promenade in Douglas, which is usually busy, but more so in the evenings when the beer tent is full and entertainment is supplied – or you can opt to just take in the midway.(above right)

One of the many pubs that line the course offering unique entertainment while you sip on your ale. (above)



FAST FACTS

IN THE BEGINNING

Used from 1907 to 1910, the original TT circuit was known as the St. John's Course at a length of 15 miles 1430 yards.

FOUR COURSES

In total, four different track layouts have been used for Isle of Man TT races: St John's Course (1907-1910), Clypse Course (1954-1959) and the Mountain Course in two different iterations (1911-1914 and 1914-Present).

A LONG RACE TRACK

A lap of the current Isle of Man TT Mountain course is 37.73 miles long.

AND THE WINNER IS?

As of 2015 Honda had the most victories at the Isle of Man TT races with 252.

THE MOST RACES

By the end of the 2014 Isle of Man TT, Yamaha motorcycles had finished 9525 races on the island, more than any marque, and 3117 more than the next closest manufacturer.

GETTING AIR

The jump at Ballaugh Bridge has become a popular vantage point for spectators keen on catching a glimpse of their favourite riders mid-flight.

GREET THE FAIRIES

Superstitious riders and those who value tradition will often pay a visit to Fairy Bridge to say hello to the fairies.

ONLY THE THIRD TIME

TO BE CANCELLED

In 2001, the entire TT was cancelled due to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease in the U.K. The risk to agricultural industry on the island was just too great.

SNAEFELL MOUNTAIN

The highest point on the Isle of Man is the summit of Snaefell Mountain at approximately 620 meters.

The conditions for racers at that point on the track are often much different than at the start in Douglas.





A regular podium finisher, Adrian Archibald goes over Braddan Bridge in front of a full grandstand built on the church lawn next to the cemetery. (left) A memorial for Joey Dunlop sits at the top of Snaefell Mountain, where people come in droves to have their picture taken next to this legend.(above) The mountain road coming out of Ramsey is limited to one-way traffic during the TT. This is a great place to hang out and watch the wannabe racers pretend they are TT stars. (below)







Whether this guy is fixing his own bike or serving as a mobile mechanic, this is not an uncommon scene. (above)

The late Martin Finnegan flies over Ballaugh Bridge motocross style. (left)





Perusing an online buy-and-sell website leads to a bike build long forgotten

Reconnecting



FAST FACTS

THE MASTER STUNTMAN'S BIKE

The XR750 was Evel Knievel's favourite motorcycle, using this model from 1970 to his final jump in 1977.

A PERSONAL BEST WAS A WORLD RECORD

Knievel's personal record was jumping over 14 buses at 133 feet. This was also a world record that stood for 25 years.

FROM DIRT TO PAVEMENT

A variation of the XR750 dirt-track racer was the XRTT road racer.

THE WINNINGEST BIKE

The XR750 is the winningest motorcycle in AMA Grand National Championships and is said to be the most successful race bike of all time, winning more races than any other motorcycle in history.

RULES CHANGE, SO DO THE BIKES

Luckily for spectator entertainment and the next level of dirt-track racing, the XR750 was created out of necessity for the 1970 race season owing to AMA Grand National Championship rule changes.

Story and Photos by Costa Mouzouris

ditor Glenn Roberts and I have in the past discussed our impulse to reconnect with our youth. In biker terms, this means reacquiring a motorcycle (or more) that has some significance to us emotionally. Last summer, Glenn bought a near-mint 1981 Yamaha XS650, which he told me is almost exactly the same model as the first street bike he owned, give or take a model year. A year ago, I too acquired what had been my first street motorcycle, an extra-clean, low-mileage Honda FT500 Ascot.

With The Past



Many years of storage and moving has resulted in two stress cracks - one on each side - on the tail section under the seat

We both came across our respective retro-bikes quite accidentally: Glenn through an acquaintance; I while leisurely perusing classified ads with no intention to buy. I do this to kill time on occasion, and to read the sometimes comical, sometimes ridiculous claims some sellers make when trying to pawn their rides.

Finding a Piece of History

While again glancing through online classifieds recently, I came across a picture that froze me in my browsing. Within the tiny thumbnail preview picture I saw a machine that took but a millisecond to recognize, and it brought back a wave of memories. Clicking on the image, the description was very brief, mentioning some of its easily recognizable parts, stating (erroneously) that it had an aluminum frame, and that only 200 were built. I'm not sure where that last part came from, but there is in fact only one such bike in existence. And as the larger images confirmed, it was indeed a bike I had built more than 20 years ago.

Before I became a motorcycle journalist, I had been a motorcycle mechanic. I'd worked in a few dealerships prior to starting my own business in 1994 with partner and friend Denis Lavoie. We didn't sell motorcycles; we were instead equipped with a modest machine shop that we used to build engines and bikes for our customers.

New Shop, New Build

One of the first projects we took on after opening was for the service manager of the Montreal Harley dealer where I used to work before taking off on my own. He

wanted to build a Sportster-based dirt tracker for the street, a style now known as a street tracker. The dealer where he worked just wasn't equipped for the type of fabricating work required to take on such a project, which is why we were handed the contract.

Working at a Harley dealer has other perks, however, one of them being access to crash-damaged bikes. He bought a crashed 1986 Sportster 883, which would become the donor bike. Of course, to make a proper street tracker - lightweight, svelte and with the appropriate dirt-track look - a proper dirt-track frame had to be procured.

The connection to the frame at the foundation of the street tracker came via Lavoie's brother, Martin, Martin was an AMA-licensed Canadian flattrack racer living in Florida. He was a regular on the American flat-track circuit, making the finals more often than not, with a race victory at the Daytona short track in 1983, and an AMA national win at Sturgis in 1985. His bike of choice, of course, was the legendary Harley-Davidson XR750, a bike that is currently on display at L'Épopée de la Moto, a motorcycle museum in St-Jean-Port-Joli, just east of Quebec City on Hwy 132. But I digress.

An XR Coming Together

Martin provided the bent 1972 Harley XR750 frame, which became the basis of the street tracker. That the frame was bent was of no concern, because the top tube had to be modified anyway to provide clearance for the taller 883 engine. The entire top frame tube was removed, as were the two front downtubes, each of which was cut off between the two forward enginemounting holes. New chrome-moly tubes were repositioned and welded in place. Unfortunately, because the top tube had to sit taller to clear the cylinder heads, the reworked frame lost its unique cross-tube steering-head layout, a characteristic of true XR750 frames where the backbone meets the steering neck at the bottom and the front tubes cross the backbone to join the steering neck at the top.

To remain faithful to the XR750. an aluminum oil tank was fabricated, though it is larger than the original tank, because incorporated within its centre is a battery box. It was hand-fabricated by Montreal-based custom-bike builder Dave Cody, who had a genius eye for bike design and a surgical hand with a TIG welder. The tailpiece is an aftermarket XR750 item made of fibreglass; the swingarm is not the original tubular item, but a square-tube item that came off an Ironhead Sportster. Because the 35 mm fork on the 1986 donor bike was bent, a 39 mm fork assembly from a later model was used. The entire wiring harness was handmade by yours truly, and designed to be almost invisible.



Only 553 miles (890 km) have been put on the XR street tracker since it was built 20 years ago.



The wire wheels were laced up using stock hubs and 18-inch aluminum rims: an Akront in the front and a Sun in the rear. The peanut gas tank came off the donor bike, and Cody painted the bike, finishing it with hand pinstriping and gold-leaf lettering.

The engine was bored to 1200 cc, high-performance Screamin' Eagle cams were installed, an S&S carburetor replaced the original Keihin, and the heads were converted to a twin-spark-plug setup. The engine probably makes about 90 hp.

If memory serves, it took the better part of our first season in business to

build the bike, and it would often draw the attention of our other customers. It was informally considered the signature bike of Cosden Specialities, the name of our fledgling shop, comprising the first three letters of our first names.

Lost and Found

After six years, I went on to other things, while Denis can still be found machining and welding away at the shop. We had lost track of our beloved XR Sporty, which the service manager sold to someone in Quebec's Eastern Townships a couple of years after it was built. I even delivered the bike to the



Relays and wire harness under the tail section.

Costa hand-built the complete wire harness to
be virtually invisible.



[THE SALESMAN] FILTERED ITS POTENTIAL BUYERS. **WEANING OUT THOSE** ASKING IF THEY COULD ADD A PASSENGER SEAT OR PUT ON A SET OF DRAG BARS OR, WORSE YET, CHROME IT

new owner, but had never seen it again after that -until it popped up on my computer screen, just a few hundred pixels wide. The image immediately took me back to that summer of '94, sawing, grinding and welding steel to earn my living, and loving it.

The day after I spotted the XR in the classified ad, I called Sherbrooke Harley-Davidson, the dealer that had acquired the XR on trade, and made an appointment to see it. I got there before noon that day. I had told Alex Guyon, the sales rep I'd spoken to over the phone, that I had a keen interest in the bike. Unbeknownst to me, the bike had been on display in the showroom for about a year as a showpiece. Many people had inquired about it during that time, but Guyon filtered its potential buyers, weaning out those asking if they could add a passenger seat or put on a set of drag bars or, worse yet, chrome it, pointing them instead to other bikes in the showroom. He well understood it was more significant a machine than that, and that it needed to be handed over to someone who also understood.

The XR Goes Home

Before I arrived, he had prepared a sheet listing all the modifications made to the bike, perhaps to justify its asking price. He told me the name of the person who'd traded it in, and it was indeed the same person from the Eastern Townships to whom I'd delivered the bike. I also learned that



The handmade exhaust that was on the original build has been changed at some point during the bike's life.

It looks like the original 883 by all appearances, but the engine has been bored out to 1200 cc, high-performance cams and an S&S carburetor were installed, and the heads were converted to a twin-sparkplug setup to produce an estimated 90 hp.



the bike spent the majority of its life on display in the guy's basement, which explains why the speedometer, which was new when the bike was built, reads only 553 miles (it was a U.S. part incorrectly installed on a new bike and salvaged from warranty claims). It also explains why the bike still rolls on the Dunlop K591s I levered onto the rims so long ago. Guyon was completely dumbfounded when I confirmed these details, and even corrected him on occasion, including telling him details like the fact that the original front fender and hand-built exhaust had since been replaced - you see, I had neglected to mention over the phone that I had built the bike. When I did tell him though, the outcome was obvious. The Sporty XR had to come home.

I put the bike in a trailer after the snow melted and brought it back to Montreal. The bike is in excellent condition, though 20 years of storage has nonetheless taken a small toll. There are various chips in the frame paint, and the tailpiece, which I remember being a tight fit, sports two stress cracks, one on either side. The tires, which are barely worn in, need replacing because the sidewalls are cracked.

Aside from these repairs, I will also replace the gas tank. The peanut tank was chosen by the original owner, but I will source a replica XR750 gas tank so my XR Sporty becomes even more faithful visually to the machine on which it is modelled. Once these mods are complete, I can assure you I will not let it slip away again. MM





- Send us 1 or 2 of your favourite motorcycle related photos with a brief description. If your shot is selected for our 2016 calendar you will receive a Mojo prize pack, and of course a photo credit. Photos can be people, places, events but it's important to have a motorcycle in the shot.
- Email your digital photo to info@motorcyclemojo.com
- Quality counts, photos must be crisp, clean and a minimum of 3300 x 2600 pixels (8.5 megapixel)
- If your photo is chosen for the cover shot you will receive \$100 in addition to a Mojo prize pack.
- Deadline for submission is August 31, 2015

to the finish line.







The band's other guitarist and singer, Clayton Bellamy, grew up on a farm in Bonnyville, Alberta, and is the son of a motorcycle mechanic. There were always bikes around, and Clayton

says some of his earliest memories are of him getting dressed in his dad's motocross gear and clunking around the house in his waytoo-big boots. Clayton would regularly go to watch his dad race cross-country and hare scrambles. He followed suit, going on to race motocross as a kid; Clayton was in the

one time.

Bass player Chris Byrne, the third member of the musical trio, seems to be the odd man out when it comes to the motorcycle scene. Having ridden on dirtbikes as a kid, his desire to pursue two-wheeled transport didn't continue,

top four in the country in his class at

although Chris does admit that he's been seriously thinking about taking a motorcycle training course in his hometown of Calgary.

Homegrown

The Road Hammers started from modest beginnings. On his

way to a successful country music solo career, Jason mentioned to an executive from CMT that he'd like to start a new band that plays a fast-paced mix of country and southern rock, with some blues thrown in for good measure.

That conversation morphed into discussions about a reality TV show to air on CMT about recruiting a band; that was in 2005, and the rest, as they say, is music history.

Chris was the first recruit into the band, having played with Jason on some of his solo projects. Chris knew Clayton from the Calgary music scene and encouraged him to audition for Jason's new band. Later, Jason and his wife went to watch Clayton perform at a bar in Calgary. He was shirtless on stage, wildly swinging a microphone around and playing guitar; he then proceeded to crawl along tables, knocking patrons' drinks off. Jason's wife, Terrine, looked at her husband and said, "No!" Jason looked back at her and said, "Oh yeah!"

Jason says of Clayton: "He's the perpetual five-year-old who always keeps the fire going. He really gets excited about stuff, and he's got a lot of life energy and creative energy, and it's contagious. He's the wild child of the band."

Nashville Bound

The growing popularity of the band since its inception has been steadily on the rise, particularly after the band's self-titled first album went gold and received a Juno Award in 2006. But the rise to stardom hasn't been without its heartaches. The band members were living in the country music mecca of

Nashville, touring the States and in the middle of recording their third album when the record label went bankrupt, leaving the band in scads of red tape and unable to record elsewhere owing to contractual limitations.

Jason says the band didn't actually break up, but it did lose momentum for a few years. During those three years, Jason and Clayton pursued solo careers as well as radio DJ gigs and television shows, while Chris, who is also a studio musician, spent time in the studio recording, engineering and producing in between touring with fellow Canadian country music singer George Canyon.

Ignition

All the legalities are now past, and since 2013, the Hammers are back with a vengeance after recording their Wheels album and hitting the road to support that release and they appear to be once again hitting on all cylinders: the new album garnered the band a 2015 Juno nomination. Three Juno nominations and one Juno Award in three albums – not bad. That's in addition to numerous

Canadian Country Music Award nominations and wins over the years.

I ask the guys what the highlight of their career has been so far. Jason says knowing that the industry has recognized their efforts by all the award nominations they've received. Chris's highlight was hearing for the first time that their debut album went gold, and for Clayton, it was when the Road Hammers received a standing ovation at the Grand Old Opry and was asked on the spot to play again the next night. Each one of them is so humble, not once uttering a word of bragging, although with all their success, no one could blame them if they did. Breaking into the big time is tough, and they all remember the lean years (just before the Road Hammers, Bellamy almost quit music altogether when he couldn't make ends meet) and consider themselves blessed to have made it to where they are today.

Freewheelin'

Coincidently, all three members are self-taught musicians and attribute

EQIS OF SECULAR SECULA

"Wild Child" Clayton loves to spend any free time on his café'd Triumph Bonneville.

HE WAS SHIRTLESS ON STAGE, WILDLY SWINGING A MICROPHONE AROUND AND PLAYING GUITAR

their musical genius to listening to a smattering of folk music, southern rock, country, blues and even a bit of heavy metal thrown in for good measure. The Wheels album was an intentional departure from the previous album's trucking songs to those more motorcycle-related, but regardless of the number of wheels, the songs continue to be forceful and deliver a fast-paced, energy-driven sound that makes for some of the best driving/riding songs anywhere, and this translates into an extremely entertaining live show as well.

They have a busy summer ahead of them now that it's festival season, and they have a few concert dates playing south of the border. My wife, Gwen, and I were lucky enough to see them headline a concert during their Wheels tour along with Blackjack Billy and Doc Walker. It was an energy-packed show, and one I would highly recommend if you get the chance to see the Road Hammers live.

Get on Down the Road

During their downtime, Bellamy puts as many kilometres on his trickedout Triumph Bonneville café racer as he can, while McCoy will be getting his "real rock 'n' roll machine," a Big Bear chopper, back on the road after wintering in Nashville, in addition to keeping his kid's minibike in fine tune. And hopefully by the time you read this, Byrne will have taken his motorcycle training course and is on two wheels scooting around the Alberta countryside. However you look at it, the Road Hammers are all about making the wheels go round.

Cost-War der Contender



PHOTOS BY CARL KOTEVICH AND GRAHAM CLAYTON





The only guage is a single Smiths speedometer, and below that is the hand knob to tighten or loosen the steering's friction damper. (above)
From basket-case to restored. It can be an awful lot of work but so gratifying in the end. (left)

FAST FACTS

A RICH HISTORY

The first Matchless motorcycle was made in 1899; production began in 1901 and ran until 1966.

A HISTORY OF RACING SUCCESS

A Matchless ridden by Charlie Collier (son of the company's founder, Henry Herbert) won the first single-cylinder race in the first Isle of Man TT in 1907.

HELPING THE WAR EFFORT

Matchless manufactured 80,000 G3 and G3L models for the British Army during the Second World War, and continued to use the bikes in the 1960s.

ACQUISITIONS

Matchless bought AJS in 1931 and later purchased Sunbeam. When AMC was formed, Francis-Barnett, James and Norton were also absorbed into the company.

MATCHLESS RESURRECTION

Businessman Les Harris tried to resurrect the Matchless name in 1988, but the company was short-lived and suffered closure because of the recession of 1990.

Story by **Graham Clayton**

n the early 1950s, lightweight 4-stroke singles were the preferred machines for trials riding and scrambling (the forerunner of motocross) in much of Europe. Prominent among these were the AMC (Associated Motor Cycles) Matchless 350 G3L models that had been produced in large volume for the British military during the Second World War, and which, painted in a gloss-black civilian colour scheme, were the first new motorcycles to be introduced in the U.K. market in 1945.

ONE OF THE STANDOUT FEATURES OF THE MATCHLESS **WAS ITS PATENTED** OIL-DAMPED TELESCOPIC FRONT **FORKS**



When owner Carl Kotevich picked the bike up, the engine was in many peices. He sent the box of parts to well-known AMC-Norton guru Herb Becker in Kitchener, Ontario, to ensure that it was put together correctly.

The following year, AMC introduced Britain's first post-war competition model, the Matchless G3L C (for "competition") scrambler. This was a long-stroke 348 cc OHV single with a 69 mm bore and a 93 mm stroke. The earliest versions had a 6.3:1 compression ratio and ran on lowoctane pool gas fed by a one-inch 76D Amal carburetor, and transferred power to the gearbox using a four-plate wet clutch with fabric inserts.

The engines were of a pre-unitconstruction design with a separate dry sump engine and a linked 4-speed gearbox. These machines were readily identifiable thanks to their tall alloy barrel and cylinder head with chromed exterior pushrod tubes on the right side of the engine. The G3L engines were fitted into a brazed steel-tube singlebackbone cradle frame that was both hefty and strong.

Suspension Improvements

One of the standout features of the Matchless was its patented oil-damped telescopic front forks, which had first been introduced in 1941. These were a huge improvement over girder forks and provided an extra three inches of wheel travel, which made for a far more controllable ride. Matchless was also working on a rear suspension system in 1946, but it wasn't introduced for another five years.

The Matchless 350 single was a rugged, reliable machine that used a 21-inch front wheel and a 19-inch rear, both laced with heavy-duty spokes. The trial-type Dunlops measured 2.75" x 21" on the front and a 4.00" x 19" on the rear.

Alloy fenders were used both front and back, along with 6.5-inch drum brakes and an upswept exhaust system. A three-gallon (13.5 L) steel fuel tank, solo twin-spring saddle and low-rise handlebars finished the package. Optional items included a headlight and rear brake light, making it both street legal and available for night use.

Matchless also produced a 500 class version of the G3L, designated the G80. It used a larger 82.5 mm bore along with the same 93 mm stroke for a swept volume of 497 cc, had a 6.0:1 compression ratio and used a heavier five-plate clutch.



Upgrading Continues

Between 1946 and 1951, AMC continued to introduce various improvements to both scrambler models. In 1947, both versions were fitted with new, ½-inch shorter connecting rods, an improved oil pump and other modifications.

For 1948, new seven-inch drum brakes were made standard both front and rear on both models. The G3L C got a larger three-inch wide front tire, an improved four-bolt mount for the handlebars, and minor changes to the saddle



and forks. Starting mid-year, the G3L C also began being fitted with the same heavier bottom end as the 500 G80 C.

Both models were up-rated in 1949 with cylinder heads that used larger cooling fins, hairpin valve springs and a new compression release. In addition, the introduction of a frame-mounted steel "bash plate" better protected the lower engine.

The following year, the 350 gained a five-spring clutch, a new alloy engine top end, an iron cylinder liner, castin valve seats, plus a Lucas "Wader"

magneto. The fuel tank, now alloy, was downsized to 2.25 gallons (10.1 L) and was notably slimmer; a new cylindrical toolbox was now located under the saddle; and a quick-detachment headlight was fitted.

Rear Suspension Introduced

Rear suspension on Matchless singles was introduced in 1951, which comprised a rear swinging arm and twin shocks, the latter being the AMC-made large oil capacity "jampot units." The rear-suspension versions of the

Still being broken-in, the owner says it starts easily and is a strong runner.



350 were designated as the G3L CS (for "suspension"), though the rigid-rear versions were still sold alongside them for riders who preferred a solid rear to use in trials competition. An alternative rigid-rear option was to replace the shocks and bolt in a pair of steel strut tubes in their place as needed.

All G3L Cs were by then equipped with a new Burman-type BA 4-speed gearbox, improved engine bearings and a relocated toolbox now on the right side of the machine.

From Basket Case to Beautiful Restoration

The 350 scrambler pictured with this article is Carl Kotevich's awardwinning 1952 Matchless G3L CS that he recently treated to a groundup restoration after acquiring it disassembled from its original owner. This involved replacing quite a few old parts, including a variety of items that had found their way onto the bike from other brands. Carl got help in this regard from AMC Classic Spares in the U.K., as well as from AMOC (The AJS & Matchless Owners Club).

In 1952, AMC moved its Matchless scrambler's magneto to the front of the engine, as had long been the practice with AMC's very similar AJS scramblers, such as the model 16MC 350. Also new for the scrambler in 1952 was a Burman B52 gearbox. Other changes that year included the addition of an alloy backing plate for the seveninch front brake and a new three-bolt handlebar clamp.

The engine for Carl's bike was all apart when he bought it, so he entrusted the rebuild to well-known AMC-Norton guru Herb Becker in Kitchener, Ontario, to ensure that it was put together correctly. Herb replaced many of the engine's internals to bring the 350 back to like-new full-spec condition. Also added, as part of the rebuild, was a brand-new gearbox sourced from AMC Classic Spares. Jim Struke, Herb's AH-RMA (American Historic Racing Motorcycle Association) partner, performed much of the engine reassembly work.

Ready for Competition

Carl's bike is set up for competition

use with a 9.5:1 compression ratio, high lift "SH" cam, a straight-through competition pipe, cast competition foot pegs that weigh a hefty 2.3 kg apiece, and a Lucas NR-1 competition magneto to supply the power to the single 14 mm spark plug. One non-stock item found on Carl's scrambler is a 1½-6-inch Amal 376 monobloc carburetor that replaced the standard one-inch Amal Type 76 AE-1AK.

Carl says the bike is generally easy to start using a set procedure, and with the aid of the valve lifter (compression release) while kicking down on the right side kick-starter. Once warm, the engine idles well and pulls away cleanly.

Imitating the Best

Carl's Matchless rolls on competitionspec rims with a 19-inch front, as opposed to the standard 21-inch, plus a 19-inch rear. Onto these are mounted a pair of Ensign Universal Trials tires, three-inch front and four-inch rear. The rim size change (an early 1950s southern California off-road racing practice popularized by racing legend Bud Ekins) makes for better handling and control when riding in either deep sand or rough cross-country terrain.

Ekins began racing a Matchless scrambler in 1950, and had such success in U.S. events that he was offered a works ride by Matchless and became one of the first Americans to contest the FIM Motocross GP series in Europe.

On Carl's 350, the original forks have been completely rebuilt with 1½-inch fork tubes, and external but shrouded fork springs. Different lengths of fork springs can be used on the CS, allowing for different amounts of travel. The forks are also fitted with a wheel-type friction damper located on the upper triple clamp that can either loosen up or stiffen the steering.

The only instrumentation on the 350 is a Smiths speedo that reads to 90 mph (145 km/h). The 350 has a small solo saddle, the competition alloy fuel tank, alloy mudguards and a non-standard modest-rise handlebar. The machine has no electrics, just the competition magneto.

The overall weight of the 350 is

about 145.5 kg dry; that's some 27.3 kg lighter than its 350 G3LS road-going sibling. The engine develops an estimated 18 hp at 5600 rpm – good for about 100-plus km/h with its lower off-road gearing. Off-road bikes are more about low rpm pulling power or torque than high-revving horsepower. Carl says his bike has "a noticeable amount of torque while in second gear and a steady pull through third."

EKINS BEGAN
RACING A MATCHLESS
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MATCHLESS

Accurate Handling

Carl is still going through the breakingin period for the rebuilt engine, so he hasn't pushed it hard yet, particularly in fourth gear, but he reports that the bike "is very manageable because of its being relatively lightweight. The steering is accurate and the wider 'Westerner' handlebars add to the overall control and balance while riding," Carl said. He also mentioned that using a heavier fork oil also helps dampen the front suspension, although the teledraulic forks manage nicely over most terrain. The combination of the massive jampot rear shocks and the heavier springs on the solo seat,

working together with the swingarm itself, offers a strong positive grip. Braking is sufficient while riding at lower speeds with the help of the aggressive tires.

In the 1950s, the G3L C and CS models, and their AJS siblings were competitive mounts in off-road competition, including trials, scrambles, hillclimb and grass-track events, and consequently sold well. One of the best known of the many British Matchless 350-mounted competitors in the early 1950s was Artie Ratcliff, who won the gruelling Scottish Six Days Trial twice, first in 1950 and again in 1954. He and fellow Brit Matchless racer Ted Usher won numerous national-level events throughout the decade riding G3L competition machines.

For 1954, the Matchless 350 benefited from an enlarged inlet port and was fitted with a new 1½-inch Amal carburetor. This was replaced in 1955 by an Amal Type 376 monobloc carb of the same intake size, and this is why Carl went the same route with his scrambler.

Unfortunately, 1954 was destined to be the final production year for rigid-rear framed Matchless models.

For 1956, AMC had developed new short-stroke all-alloy engines for its 348 and 497 cc competition models. The new bore-and-stroke dimensions were 72 x 85.5 mm for the 348 cc scramblers badged as either Matchless or AJS models. These bikes were built for several years, but were ultimately deemed to be both too heavy and too expensive to be competitive in the market for off-road performance machines.

Financial Troubles

Production of the G3L-based 350 Matchless scramblers ceased in 1960, though production of the larger-capacity Matchless G80 models continued until 1966. By then, AMC's faltering bike sales and dire financial situation resulted in bankruptcy. That same year, AMC's assets were purchased by Manganese Bronze Holdings and its Matchless-AJS operations were absorbed into the newly formed Norton-Villiers concern. This would mark the end of the line for Matchless and AJS singles production.



Springs and Preload

Shocking information about suspension and ride height

ince we've recently covered different types of forks and how their damping systems work, it's time to look at springs. Springs, whether in a fork or on a shock absorber, work exactly the same way and the same rules apply. There are two terms we need to first understand and separate: spring rate and spring preload. "Spring rate" is the stiffness of the spring, usually measured in kg/mm. If it takes 10 kg to compress a spring 10 mm, its spring rate is 1.0 kg/mm. A straight-rate spring will maintain this rate throughout its travel, so it would take 20 kg to compress it 20 mm, 30 kg to compress it 30 mm, and so on. Although the pressure to compress the spring increases as the spring is compressed, the rate remains the same, at 1.0 kg/mm.

Most springs are straight rate, though there are progressively wound springs that increase in rate as they are compressed. These are easily identifiable by their unevenly wound coils, being closer together at one end (softer rate) and wider apart at the other (stiffer rate).

"Preload" is the amount a spring is compressed when assembled on a shock or fork, in its relaxed, or fully extended, position. All springs are assembled with some preload, meaning they are slightly compressed even when the damper is fully extended. For one thing, this keeps the spring from rattling around. It also puts the right amount of force on the suspension for proper operation throughout its travel. Many motorcycles have adjustable preload, which adds more compression to the spring while in the relaxed position.

One common misconception is that

increasing the preload will make the suspension stiffer. While this may be true on a progressively wound spring, most bikes use straight-rate springs. Compressing these further only raises the ride height; it does not increase the spring rate, which is what determines the spring's stiffness.

There are a few reasons to adjust the ride height. Proper ride height places the motorcycle in the correct attitude to maintain its handling characteristics regardless of the load. Adding a passenger and luggage, for example, compresses the rear end of the bike more than the front. This alters the fork angle, kicking it out more, which also increases trail, which slows steering. Cornering clearance is also reduced, and if the shocks are compressed too much, they will operate too far into their stroke and

bottom out frequently. Increasing the preload under load places everything where it should be.

In contrast, if the preload had been altered to handle a heavy load, and you then drop off your passenger and empty your saddlebags, the shock now operates near the top of its stroke and will "top out" when extending, meaning it will hammer at the top of its stroke. It's important to note that suspension works in both directions, compressing over bumps and extending over dips. If it tops out, you'll hear a clunk, and the rear wheel will likely leave the ground, which isn't really desirable if you're cranked over in a turn.

Generally speaking, a motorcycle's suspension system, front or rear, was designed to work at about a third into its travel. If you can set the preload on

It isn't uncommon to see a rear shock with an easy to access knob that adjusts preload hydraulically, alleviating the need to turn a wrench in a typically tight space.



UZUK

DIFFICULTY LEVEL:











The notched ring is the most common type of adjuster. With a special wrench, you simply turn the adjuster ring at the end of the spring until it clicks into place on the next higher or lower notch.

your bike so it sits at that level with you on it, you're good to go. This is called "setting the suspension sag." To do this, you must first take a measurement with the bike unladen, between a spot somewhere on the rear fender directly above the rear axle and the rear axle. Then, sit on the bike and have a helper take another measurement to see how much the suspension compressed. This distance will vary depending on the bike, but if you know the total rear suspension travel of your bike, usually found on the specs page of your owner's manual, you can easily determine the sag rate.

KAWASAKI

If you cannot set the sag rate to where it needs to be even at the maximum preload adjustment, or you can only achieve it near maximum preload with only you on the bike, it may be time to look into aftermarket shocks or stiffer springs. My butt proved too lardy for my KLR650, so I installed a stiffer spring. The KLR is a popular bike with tons of available aftermarket parts, so it was easy to find a spring. You might not be so lucky and might have to buy new shocks, many of which are available with different rate springs.

Everything mentioned above also works for the front suspension, though most forks do not provide external preload adjusters. If you determine the sag on your fork is excessive, you can

alter it by adding spacers between the fork caps and the springs, though it will be a trial-and-error process. PVC tubing works great for this.

With the preload properly adjusted, you'll be getting the most out of your bike regardless of the load you carry. **MM**

Technical articles are written purely as reference only and your motorcycle may require different procedures. You should be mechanically inclined to carry out your own maintenance and we recommend you contact your mechanic prior to performing any type of work on your bike.



The tighter coils of a progressively wound shock spring offer a softer spring rate, but once the wider spaced coils begin to work the ride will become firmer.

PRODUCT REVIEWS =

Progressive Suspension Monotube cartridge kit/shock spring

Upgrading a Gold Wing for a better ride

Text and photos by Ron Keys



New and improved. The new cartidge simply drops into the fork tube, add oil and button it back up.



The original system is much more complicated; here a fork leg is shown disassembled.

ne fine day last summer, as I transitioned from the parking lot to the roadway while pulling out of my favourite restaurant, a bone-jarring thud and the screeching sound of metal on concrete was the final indicator that something had to be done. I'd been dealing with it for a long while: the suspension on my 2005 Gold Wing is much too soft. The spring on the rear shock is too yielding, bottoming easily and soaking up precious cornering clearance. Even more comfort-sacrificing comes via the antiquated damper-rod front forks, and the anti-dive unit on the left fork leg that seems to lock up over minor bumps in the road, creating a harsh ride. Every undulation in the pavement sends reverberations through the handlebars, and my spine, elbows and shoulders become the secondary suspension system for the bike.

Something needed to be done, so I decided to go with a kit made by Progressive Suspension, a name well known in the motorcycling world for more than 30 years. Although there are simpler fork setups available, like progressively wound springs and different fork oil, I chose Progressive's Monotube cartridge kit (P/N 31-2511), a drop-in, gas-charged cartridge system that also includes beefier springs. Rear shocks are available, but they are costly, so I chose a heavier spring, also from Progressive Suspension (P/N 01-1179B), for my stock rear shock. These items were all my Wing needed for a vastly improved ride.

An inherent problem with the passage of oil through an orifice in a damper rod is that suspension action

IT ALSO HAS A UNIQUE FREQUENCY-SENSING INTERNAL VALVE SYSTEM THAT GAUGES THE MAGNITUDE OF THE BUMPS AND ADJUSTS THE DAMPING ACCORDINGLY.

gets exponentially stiffer the faster the fork compresses, like over big, sharp bumps. Also, temperature fluctuations cause dramatic changes in the air pressure within the fork, making it harsher as it heats up. To make matters worse, when air mixes with oil, the viscosity of the resulting foamy mixture is reduced, and the fork's capacity to damp the rebound action of the spring is severely diminished.

The Monotube effectively converts the damper-rod fork into a cartridge fork, and the cartridge is charged with nitrogen, which is virtually unaffected by temperature swings, thereby preventing numerous nasty problems. It also has a unique frequency-sensing internal valve system that gauges the magnitude of the bumps and adjusts the damping accordingly.

The mechanical work involved is not difficult, but it requires a basic understanding of the mechanics of your front forks, because they have to come apart to install the Monotube. Once installed, it is critical that the suggested fork oil volumes are adhered to in order to attain optimal performance: too much oil will cause hydraulic lock, while too little will cause the forks to wallow. The antidive valve, a feature that reduces dive when braking, becomes redundant, given the effectiveness of the new Monotube system, so I installed an aftermarket shim that renders the valve inoperable.

My kit also arrived with a heavier rear shock spring. Changing the shock spring is a bit trickier and requires a special tool to compress the shock, so it may be advantageous to have this job done at a shop.

With everything installed, I set out on my first ride of the season. Lakeshore Road from Newcastle to Port Hope is always rough, and after a hard Ontario winter, it lives up to its reputation. I used to set the rear shock preload to 14 out of 25 positions; it is now down to five. The spring is progressively wound so that the tightly wound coils absorb the small bumps, with the widely spaced windings taking care of the larger bumps. With a passenger and a trailer added to the bike, I suspect this firmer spring will be just right.

As I peer down through the fairing opening at the front fork, I can see it moving up and down freely, gobbling up all those small undulations. This is pleasant relief on my arms and shoulders. Riding over a railway crossing is effortless, as the bigger bumps are absorbed just as easily. But what about those high-speed, peg-scraping curves?

Northbound on County Road 10 provides those high-speed sweepers as it winds its way through the hills to Millbrook. The experience is as if being on rails: no wallowing or spine-crushing jolts, and although I am not foolish enough to peer down at my fork again, I can feel it is working well.

Installing the Progressive Suspension Monotubes and a heavier, progressively wound rear spring has vastly improved ride comfort and stability, and cornering on my bike, with much better overall handling. I am very satisfied with the results, as are my wellused joints and spine. The Monotube system and shock spring retail for \$569 and \$135, respectively, for my Gold Wing, though they are also available for various Harley-Davidson models and the Kawasaki KLR650, and more bikes are being added to the list. Check with your dealer or favourite parts supplier for availability of this product or other kits.



Mitas E-07 Dakar Tires

There's a new tire in town

Reviewed by **Glenn Roberts**

hen I was at the International Motorcycle Supershow in Toronto this past January, I noticed a new brand of dual-sport tire at the Twisted Throttle (formerly A Vicious Cycle) booth. Having never seen or heard of Mitas tires before, I asked store manager Eric Russell about them. As he was describing the Mitas E-07 Dakar tire, a fellow approached and began telling us, in a very thick eastern European accent, how predominant Mitas tires are in Europe, and how he had used them for many years in the "old country." That was a good enough recommendation for me - positive firsthand experience counts for a lot of credibility.

Mitas has been producing tires since 1932. The Czech company makes a wide range of tires and, according to the company's literature, specializes in off-road tires. In Europe, Mitas tires are used by some of the top names in extreme enduro, freestyle motocross and speedway racing, allowing the company to gain important feedback under extreme conditions.

The E-07 Dakar tires used in this review come in various sizes, but for my Triumph Tiger 800XC, I'm using the 90/90-21 front and 150/70-17 on the rear.

The E-07 Dakar are a 50/50 (street/dirt) tire and feature a crossply construction with a chevron-type tread pattern. I was told that the Dakar tires have a stiffer sidewall to better fend off punctures in that area during backwoods adventures, and I was a little concerned how difficult a stiffer sidewall might be to install.

I enlisted the help of regular Mojo contributor Clinton Smout, owner of the S.M.A.R.T. off-road rider training school. He doesn't have any fancy tools or tire-changing machines; these are off-road tires and should be able to be





Far more aggressive than stock rubber, these Mitas tires will allow me to play a fair bit harder off the beaten path. I'll report back at the end of the season about the overall durability and longevity of these tires.

changed or repaired in the wild. And since Clinton has changed hundreds, if not thousands of tires with minimal equipment, I considered him to be the best guy for the job. In fact, Clinton doesn't even own a bead breaker. He simply uses the kickstand of another bike to break the bead after the wheel has been removed – not rocket science, but really good stuff to know if you're in trouble in the bush.

The stiff sidewalls didn't hamper the tire installation, and after installing Counteract balance beads, we headed out on the Ontario BMW GS Challenge route, which Clinton once again hosted this year.

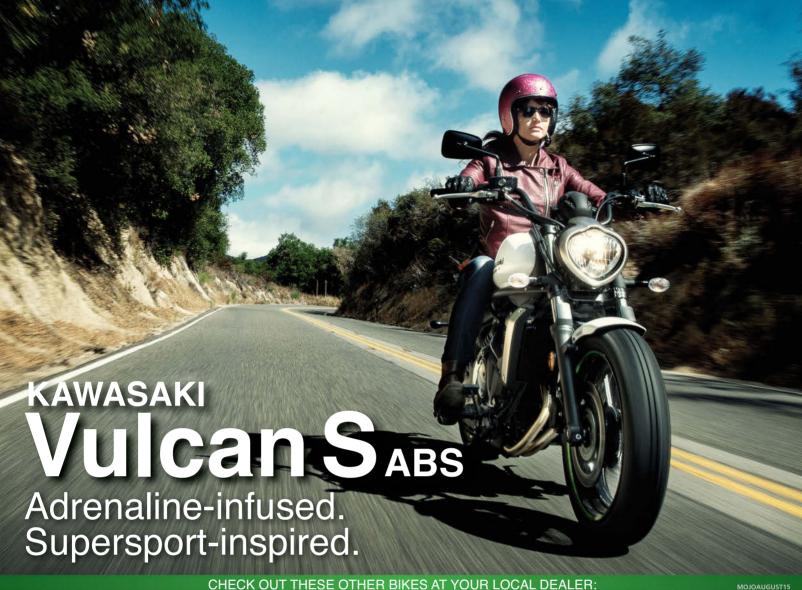
We rode on pavement to the trails and some very deep sand, soft to hardpack forest trails and some deeply rutted mud holes thanks to 4x4 pickup trucks. I can tell you that the tires worked as promised. There is no way the original tires would have even come close to doing what the Mitas Dakars enabled me to do. On the pavement,

the tires are quiet and deliver a smooth ride, and they stick to the road as good as the original Pirelli Scorpion Trail tires while leaning as far as I normally would during regular riding.

The front tire tread measures 6 mm just off-centre (there is a raised strip at the tire's centre that measures 5 mm tread depth), the rear tire 11.5 mm just off-centre. The rear tire's raised centre strip is only 3 mm below the top of the tread.

So far the Mitas Dakar tires have me hooked and I will follow up with a report at the end of the riding season as to the longevity of the rubber and how the tires faired in everyday riding. Stay tuned.

The 90/90-21 Mitas E-07 retails for \$133.50 at twistedthrottle.ca, while the rear 150/70-17 sells for \$217.92. I consider that money well spent for the added enjoyment I'll get out of my bike, since I no longer have to pass by the gnarlier trails wishing I could go play a little harder. **MM**





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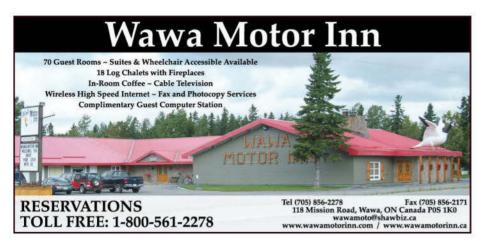
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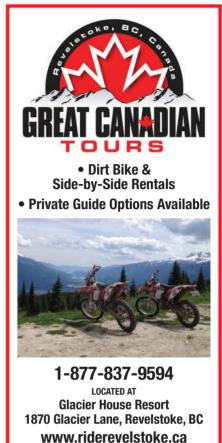
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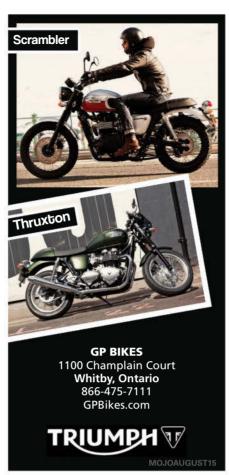
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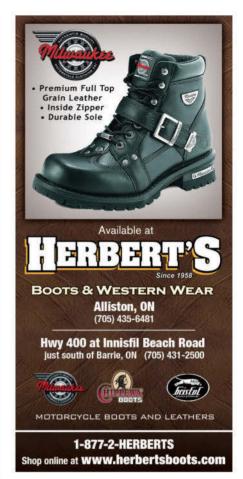
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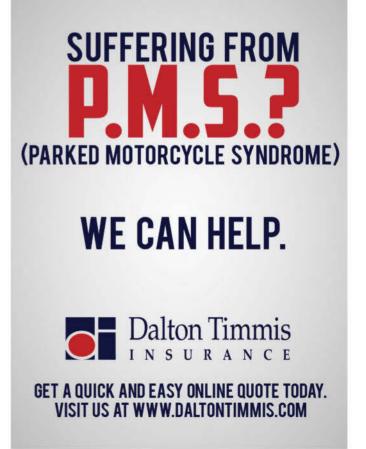
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2015 YAMAHA BOLT C-SPEC

The Bolt has quickly become one of Yamaha's best selling models, and this new variant with its café inspired styling hopes to tap into a growing trend and even more sales. A cruiser is generally as far from a café as it gets, but the C-spec wouldn't be the first such Yamaha model to pull off a new look.





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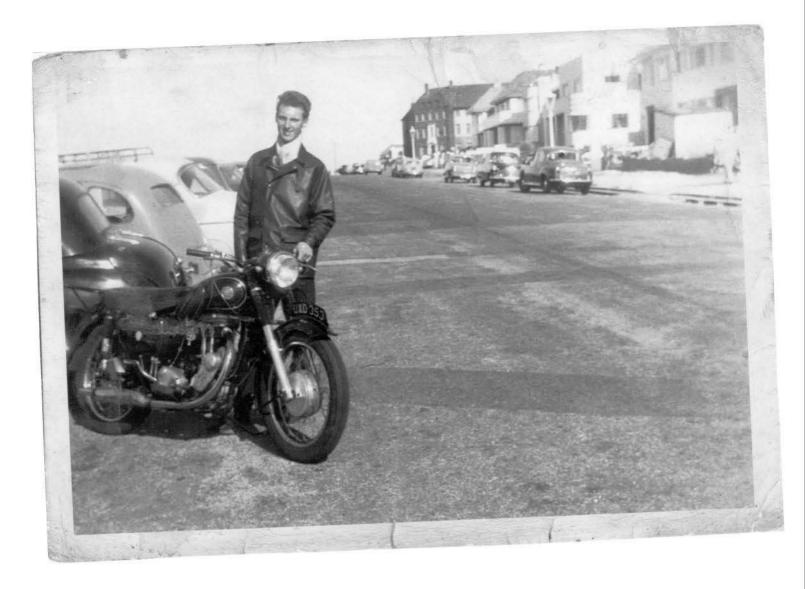
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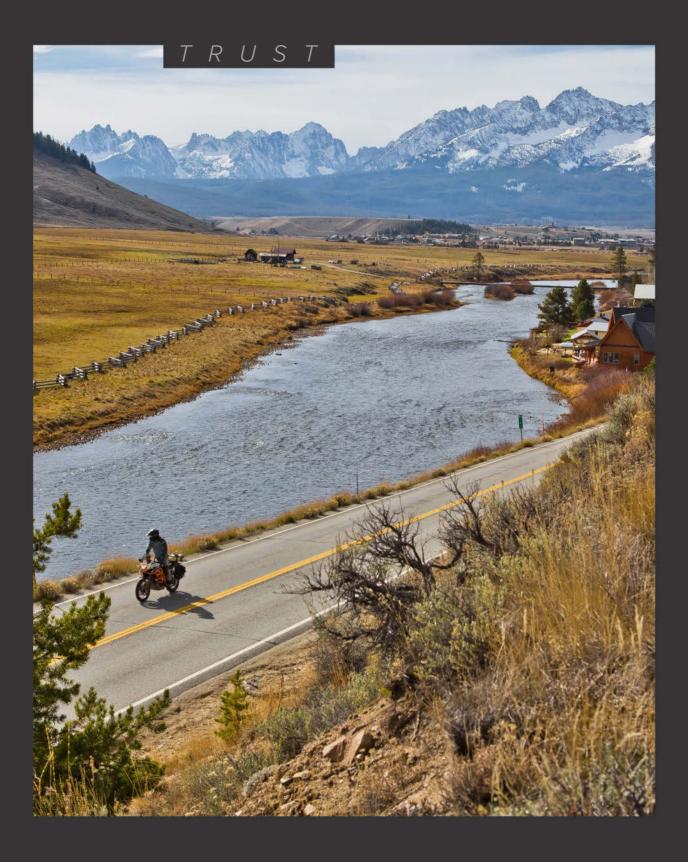


This is a photo from 1958 of my father, Keith Robinson in Bournemouth, England; a popular destination for motorcycle riders at that time. The motorcycle is an AJS 350 cc, which he bought new for 200 pounds.

The photo was taken by his girlfriend and future wife, my mother, Margaret.

- Submitted by Steve Robinson

Submissions to Remember When? are always welcome. If your photo(s) is printed we will send you \$25.00 High resolution digital photos are acceptable as well as prints. If you wish the print back please include a self-addressed stamped envelope.









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